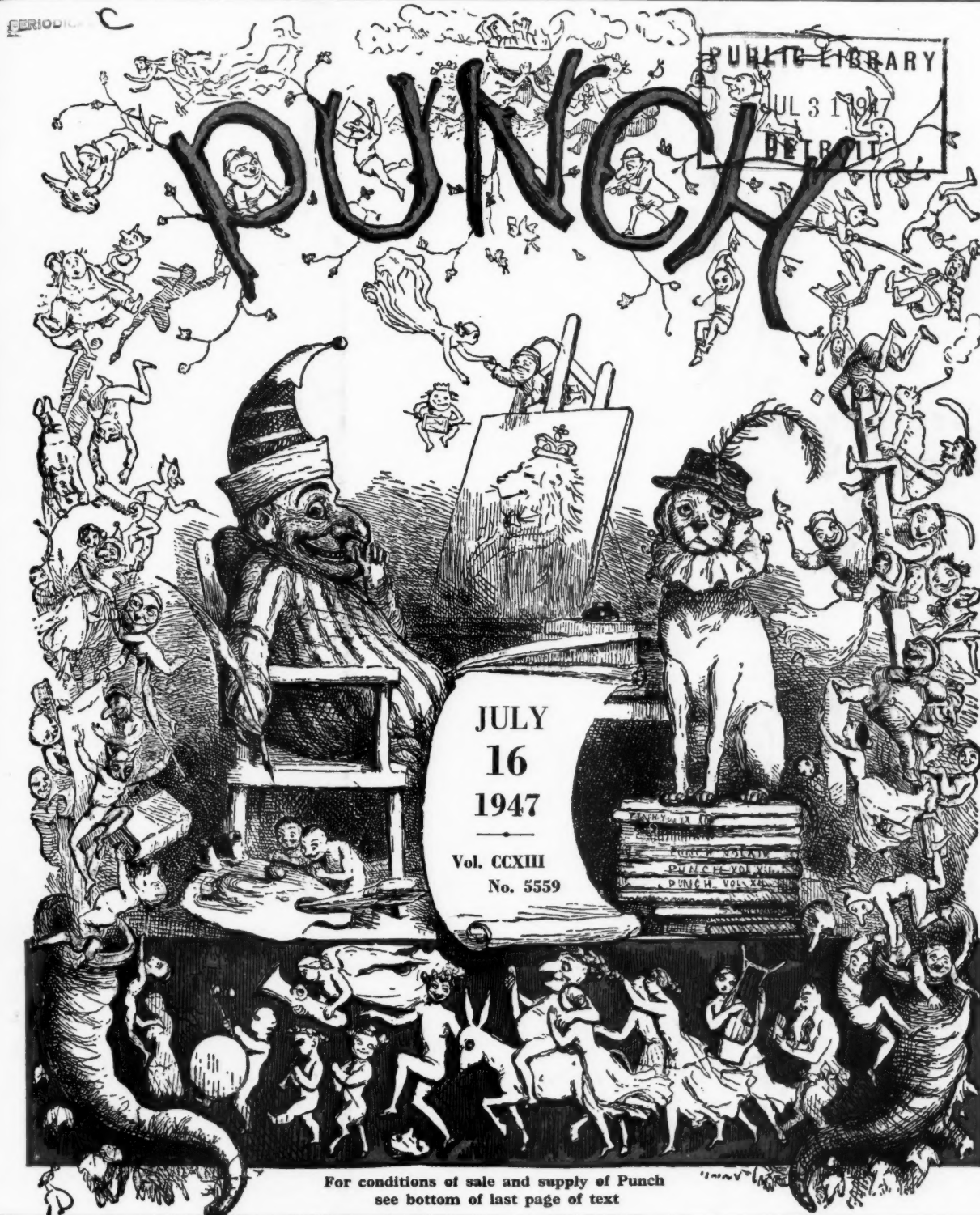


CADBURYS MILD DESSERT CHOCOLATE



For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
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wool utility dress for early autumn: at most good stores



GOOD THINGS come by two and two —

Roundabouts and swings,
Beer and skittles, stars and stripes,
Cabbages and kings.
Silver bells and cockle shells,
Audit ale and stoups,
Patch and powder, beaux and belles,
SYMINGTON'S AND SOUPS.

W. SYMINGTON & CO. LTD., MARKET HARBOROUGH.

Fore!



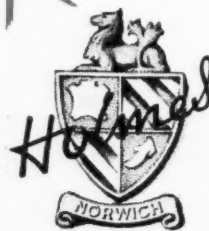
On the Fairway to return

IDRIS

The Quality Soft Drink

"Kumfrees"

by



"Kumfee" sandal in primrose calf

BY APPOINTMENT TO HIS
MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI



BY APPOINTMENT TO HER LATE
MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA

G. B. Kent and Sons Ltd.
Brushmakers

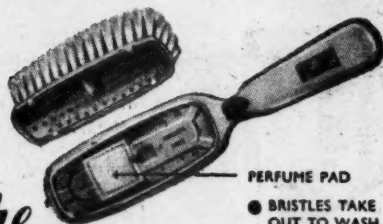
Beauty Secret...

The majority of women have the mistaken idea that if you brush a permanent or natural wave it is likely to straighten it and spoil the "set". Leading hairdressers in England and U.S. know that the more you brush a permanent or natural wave the longer it will last and the more it improves the hair and gives a glossy finish to the "set".

The best brush for this purpose is...



★ Miss Frankie Whitten — London's most photographed Blonde Model and Mannequin — says: "I find the Kent-Cosby 'Allure' Hairbrush greatly improves the beauty of the hair generally".



Allure

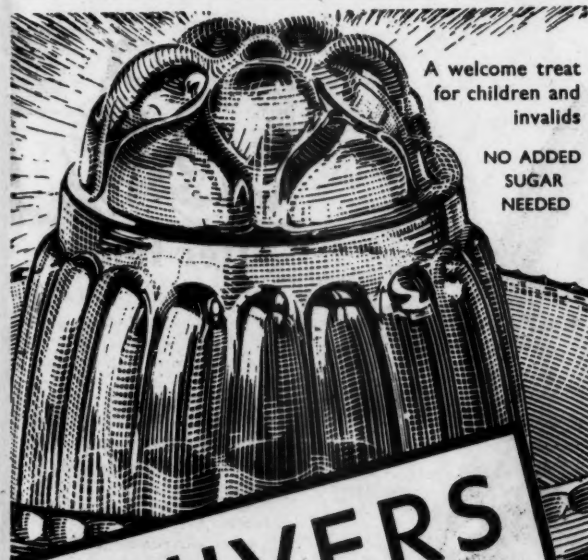
PERFUME HAIRBRUSH

Brushes beauty and fragrance
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PERFUME PAD

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for children and
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NO ADDED
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CHIVERS JELLIES

On sale again everywhere

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With a distinguished background

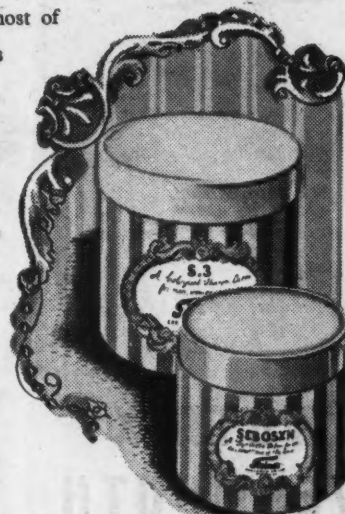
These beauty products boast one of the most distinguished of backgrounds—they are exactly the same as those used in Steiner's Grosvenor-street salons. And they are now available in limited quantities at most of the best shops and stores throughout the country.

S.3 has, for years, washed the hair of famous beauties in the Steiner salon. The loveliest shampoo in the world—and perfect for children as well as adults.

Sebosyn is a hairfood and setting agent. It is essential for dry, dull, brittle or breaking conditions.

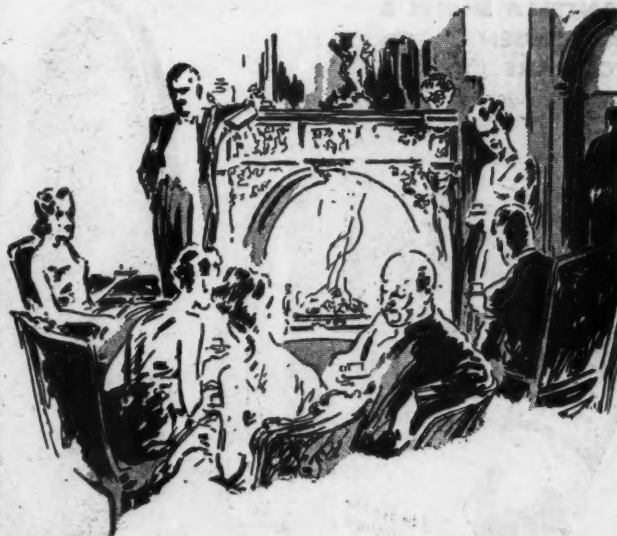
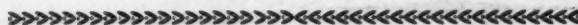
Steiner

HAIR BEAUTY PREPARATIONS



66 Grosvenor Street London W1

Q.N.2



Discriminating people prefer the subtle fragrance and flavour of freshly-roasted coffee that is captured and held in every tin of

LYONS COFFEE

AROMA SEALED

LYONS OF CADBY HALL



*A parching sun, a cloudless sky,
The centre court and you and I;
The set has lingered on and on,
With double deuce and deuce anon;
A back hand smash. We cheer—
and how!*

*We can have gin and VOTRIX
now.*

VOTRIX VERMOUTH

SWEET **9/3** OR DRY

He's dreaming of the days when
**VANTELLA SHIRTS &
VAN HEUSEN**
COLLARS

are easy to get again
(offadeletts unshrinkable
cloth with three
sleeve lengths to
every neckband size !)



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SUPPLIED TO THE
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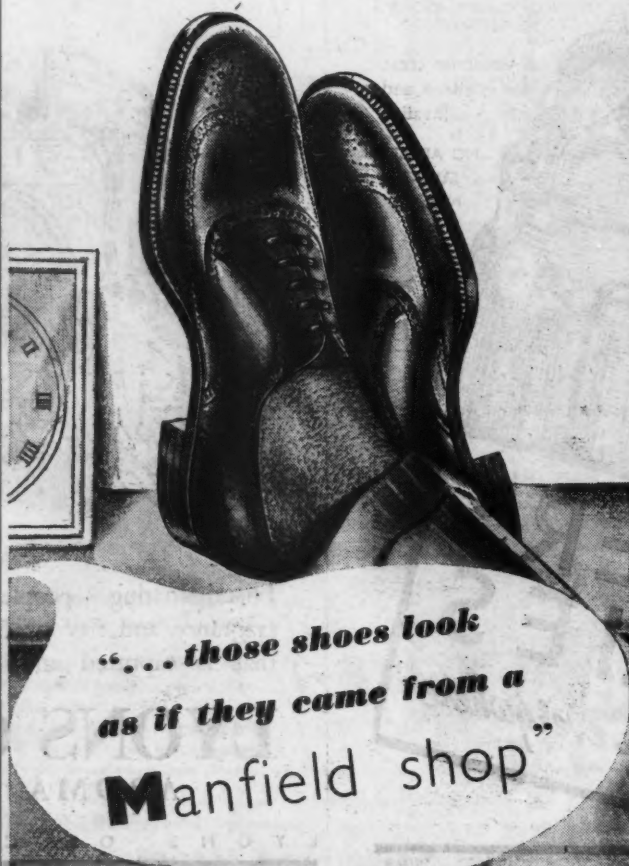
Take a note . . .

Good-looking, snug-fitting
—when choosing gloves the
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DENT'S GLOVES

Hand in Glove with Style for over 150 years



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MORE THAN ME!**



Women don't realize what a pipe of Murray's Mellow Mixture means to a man. It's got a flavour all its own. It's a grand tobacco of medium strength—the strength most men prefer. Cool, fragrant, comforting. Burns slowly and evenly, and therefore lasts longer. That is important these days.

**MURRAY'S
MELLOW MIXTURE**
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MURRAY, BONS AND COMPANY LTD., BELFAST,
NORTHERN IRELAND where good tobacco
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After-lunch alertness

Present-day demands on individual productivity call for day-long activity. Drowsiness after meals can be, and often is, attributable to indigestion. The time-proved remedy for digestive ailments is "Dr. Jenner's Absorbent Lozenges." This 150 years old specific, discovered by Dr. Jenner of Vaccination fame, has been increasingly recommended by five generations of Physicians. Prices 1/5 and 3/4, obtainable from Chemists everywhere, or send a post card to the address below for helpful Literature and Free Sample in handy pocket-case of "Dr. Jenner's Absorbent Lozenges."

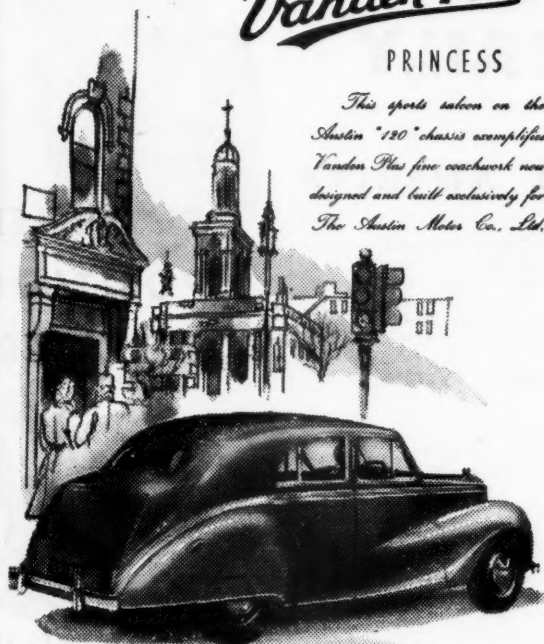
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THE Vanden Plas

PRINCESS

This sports saloon on the Austin "120" chassis exemplifies Vanden Plas fine coachwork now designed and built exclusively for The Austin Motor Co., Ltd.



VANDEN PLAS (ENGLAND), 1923, LIMITED, KINGSBURY WORKS, KINGSBURY, LONDON, N.W.9.
Telephone: COLINDALE 6171-2.



July

July is the month when the farmer surveys his crops and prospects. Between seed time and harvest he reviews his position; forecasts of grain and root crops are made; hay harvesting begins. In all seasons the modern farmer calls on his banker for some necessary service; he can always turn to his bank for counsel and help in the day-to-day transactions of this basic yet ever changing industry. The Midland Bank, so intimately concerned in agricultural conditions throughout England and Wales, is ever ready to give the farmer the specialised service he may require.

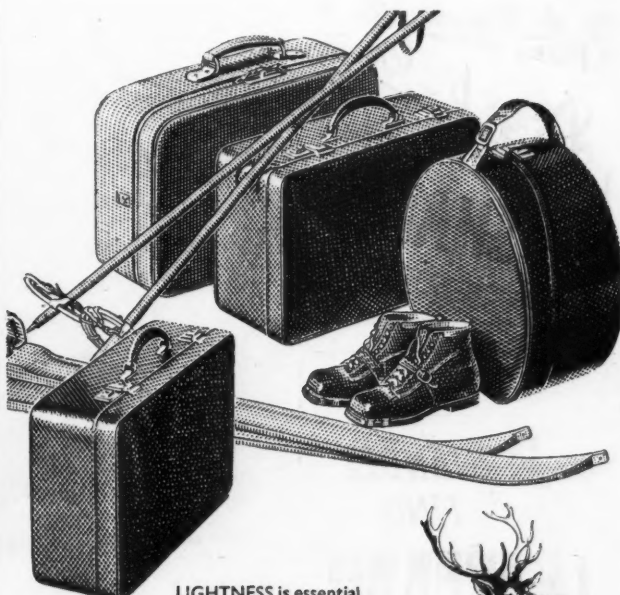
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Cigars

Rolled in Jamaica from finest leaf

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LIGHTNESS is essential in travel goods — and Antler has always led in this respect—but to combine it with strength takes the skill and experience of Antler workmanship. Unmistakable, too, is the beauty of line, finish and quality of Antler travel goods; yet you'll be surprised how inexpensive they can be.



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The most distinguished name in Travel Goods

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Just roll on . .

like an ordinary bandage—
notice that Prestoband sticks to
itself as you roll, but *not to the*
skin—Then



cut off and
press down
the end



it's as simple as that with
PRESTOBAND
THE ANTISEPTIC SELF-ADHESIVE BANDAGE

In three widths: 1" wide 5d., 1"
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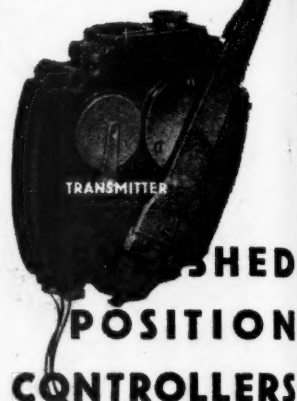


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THE STANDARD MOTOR COMPANY LIMITED, COVENTRY
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Punch, July 16 1947

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So simple—so quick, and so completely answers the Modern Man's needs. You just pick up the Wilkinson Dry Shave Razor and apply it with a firm rocking movement and you have a smooth, perfect shave. *No lather, no new blades, no electricity.* Made by the firm that have been forging swords for British royalty since 1772—that alone will speak for its quality and fine craftsmanship. Ask to see one to-day.

**Wilkinson
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Established 1772

Price 40/- (Inc. Purchase Tax).

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**"No other tyre will really
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Firestone
 BEST TODAY ★ STILL BETTER TOMORROW

TIME FOR A **CHURCHMAN'S No. 1**

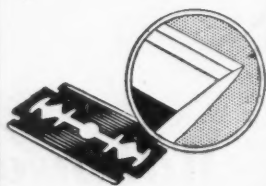
**"Now for
 15 minutes' pleasure
 and satisfaction."**



Issued by The Imperial Tobacco Co.
 (of Great Britain & Ireland), Ltd.

G.M.

**Gillette
put
shoulders
behind
each edge!**



2/6 FOR 10 INCL. TAX



Every edge sharper than a surgeon's scalpel, shaped in three facets, forming supporting shoulders to make it more durable. Precision-tested at every stage. Gillette's ceaseless research proves this the best way to make blades—for shaves that are quicker, better-looking and more economical.

**'Good Mornings'
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Consul—a town shoe, quiet, distinguished and beautifully made. Characteristic of
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a tyre
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a Motor-Cycle Sports Tyre that is so "right" for speedway's gruelling conditions that the leading speedway riders insist on Goodyear.

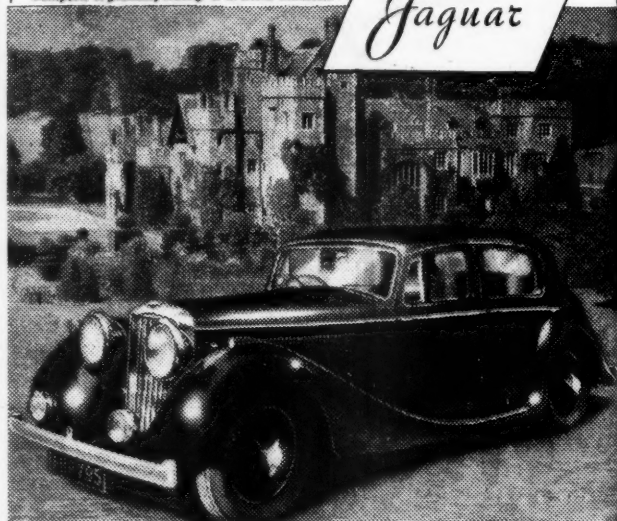
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GOODYEAR

The finest car of its class in the world . . .

The presence and the performance of the Jaguar are alike distinguished and have earned universal approval. Each of the Saloon Models offered on 1½, 2½ and 3½ litre chassis is a full 5 seater car, luxuriously appointed and incorporating many modern refinements.

Compton Wymates, stately Warwick's mansion.

Jaguar



JAGUAR CARS LTD. COVENTRY



PUNCH

Or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCXIII No. 5559

July 16 1947

Charivaria

DURING the recent storm in London it became so dark that cars had to put on their lights. What gave many people the impression that it really was night, however, was the fact that the street lamps were not lit.

A grocer maintains that there should be much more sugar available for the general customer next year. He denies that he is building his hopes on sand.

A writer looks forward to the time when it will only be necessary to press a button and all our work will be done for us. Yes, but who is going to press the button?

Many great inventors have reaped little reward for their discoveries. Perhaps only Archimedes got hold of a really satisfactory screw.

Food Flash

"I am simply living from hand to mouth on fertiliser at present," said Mr. Peter Campbell, of Natal Estates, Mount Edgecombe.—"Natal Mercury."

A judge recently said that he had never attended a fancy dress ball. He should look in on one some time. There'll be no need to change.

It was recently stated that small boys in one London district go to the cinema to smoke cigarettes. They say it helps to pass the time until they are old enough to see "A" films.

"6.30 p.m. Special form of service appointed by the Archbishops.
8 p.m. Civil Service in Guildhall Square."

Church notice board (South sea).

Cups of tea provided?

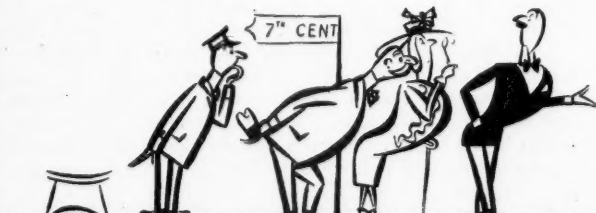
An exhibition of antique furniture included stools worn smooth by users in the seventh century. One slippery sofa was reputed to go back to the Hengist and Horsehair period.



Skipper's Kindly Act

"He ran to the quayside and leaped across several feet of water to clutch the ship's rail. The captain saw his desperate last minute jump, sent for him and gave Tom a dressing gown that he long remembers."—"Singapore Free Press."

"When I was first televised," says a correspondent, "I had an uncomfortable feeling that my trousers looked baggy at the knees." He hadn't mastered the B.B.C. technical hitch.



Fair Stood the Wind for France.

On board the S.S. "Worthing," five minutes out of Newhaven bound for Dieppe with a cargo of writers, journeymen, seasick spinsters, potential smugglers and determined drinkers. Wind freshening. Sea disorderly. Speed 24 knots.

THE secret of eating soup is to make the down-stroke as the ship comes up and the up-stroke as she settles into the next trough. This halves the distance the spoon has to travel, provided it is held limply enough to allow gravity to come into play. A glance round the dining saloon shows that most passengers are giving gravity ample scope.

Not that it is rough. One is not prepared to use so landlubberly a word while the crockery is still adhering without difficulty to the table. But the wind is freshening; so much may be said without loss of face. And if it freshens much more there will be no harm in deciding to cut the sweet and announcing one's intention of going on deck to blow the cobwebs away. It may be possible to work in a nonchalant joke about flying saucers. Meanwhile here is some excellent chicken and—good heavens, yes, ham.

There is a rumour that Mr. Molotov is on board. Certainly the gentleman at the next table but one bears a marked resemblance and eats his beetroot with something of a Russian air. The rumour spreads rapidly, until one passenger, with astonishing boldness, steps up to the gentleman's table and bluntly inquires whether he is in fact the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs. The gentleman says no, a reply which is generally taken to establish his identity beyond all doubt.

The captain has invited us on to the bridge. There's privilege for you! If life has anything sweeter to offer than the freedom of the bridge (the old *jus pontis* of the Romans) I should like to hear of it. Your ordinary passenger may be comfortable enough on the boat deck, or in that part of the ship—the name of which escapes me—which has padded leather seats, plate-glass windows and unrivalled views of the English Channel, but—well, you have only to observe the sour look he gives me as I announce, perhaps rather loudly, my intention of "popping up on the bridge presently," to see the difference between us. The circumstance that, but for the fact that I am tagging along with a party of eminent men, I should be booted off the bridge as unceremoniously as the next man is neither here nor there. I am going up.



Gay

"I used to be Comedy at one time."

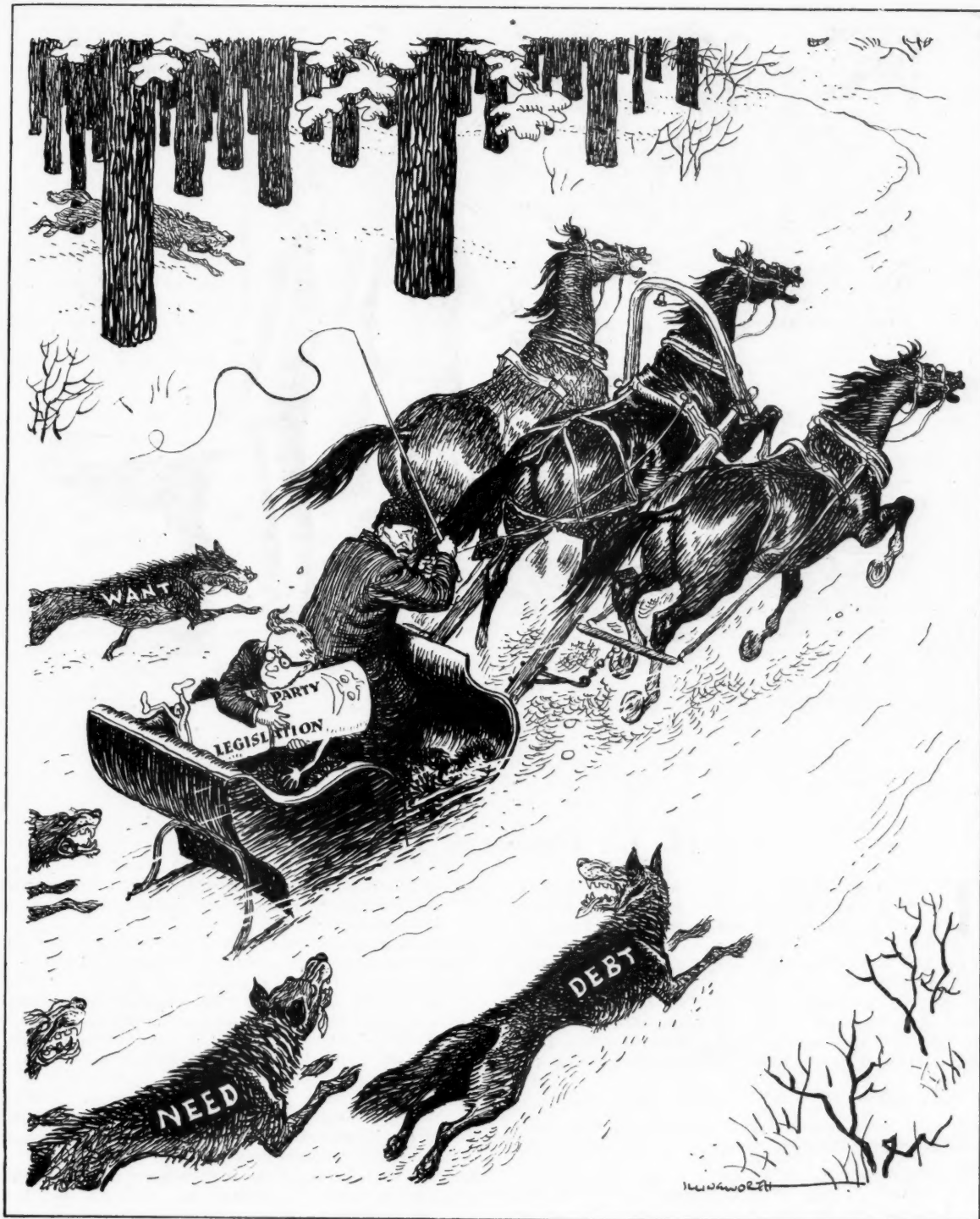
The wind is very fresh indeed. When the mouth is opened it blows the cheeks out like a couple of balloon spinnakers, and to expel the surplus air it is necessary to turn down wind and exhale. Instantly the ears are forced out at right angles to the head, presenting a somewhat comical and unseamanlike appearance to the watchers down below. It will be better to stand on the lee side of the bridge and exchange a few words with the captain. The captain collects beetles. This might not be remarkable but for the fact that he pursues his hobby at sea. He hoists a sort of wind-sock or cone at the mast-head and towards the end of the voyage he lowers it to see whether he has caught anything. We are a little alarmed when he tells us this. He has a quiet and most pleasant manner and he handles his ship with every appearance of coolness and efficiency. But really! If he goes on to say that when he is ashore he hangs a net out in his orchard on the chance of catching a few fish I shall go below at once and adjust my lifebelt. But our fears are groundless. It appears that the air in mid-Channel teems with insect life. The captain has caught spiders, lady-birds, beetles—and he sends them to some scientific body at Oxford which is studying the migratory habits of these creatures. Two questions occur to the agile mind. How can he tell which way the beetles were going—inward or outward bound—when he caught them? Has he trapped any flying saucers yet? I try the second question first and he smiles appreciatively. He sees the point. He is not, however, as uproariously amused as one might have hoped. He does not have to steady himself against the binnacle until the hurricane of laughter has spent itself. Is it possible that he has been asked the same question before?

The combination of sun and wind, the occasional whip of spray over the canvas weather-screen, the speed of the ship (24 knots is good going when the sea is—not rough, mind you, but uneven), the confident feeling of a foolproof anti-nausea pill in one's inside, the first faint suggestion of the French coast-line ahead, I do not see that one can ask for more than this. The sea is in my blood. My smoke-stack is thoroughly salt-caked. There is a porpoise on my starboard bow. If I remain holding firmly to this stanchion, staggering neither to the right hand nor to the left, I may easily be mistaken for a mariner.

Two more of our party have now arrived on the bridge and are discussing the beetle-trap. One holds the view that its purpose is to indicate the direction of the wind, the other states categorically that it is not the direction but the *pressure* of the wind that is recorded by this instrument. They approach the captain, who tells them that it is a trap for beetles. I have no wish to hear the rest of this conversation and concentrate my attention on the break in the coast-line which may well be Dieppe. In three-quarters of an hour, perhaps less, we shall be in. A cascade of porters will be upon us. Phrases like "*Est ce que je suis*—ah—supposed *de declarer mon petit carton de cigarettes*" will come readily to my lips. And a stream of instructions, in a language utterly unlike anything I learnt at school, will speed me on my way to the Café de —. But that is still in the future. For the moment the voice I hear is very English, and it is saying "Caught any flying saucers yet, Captain?"

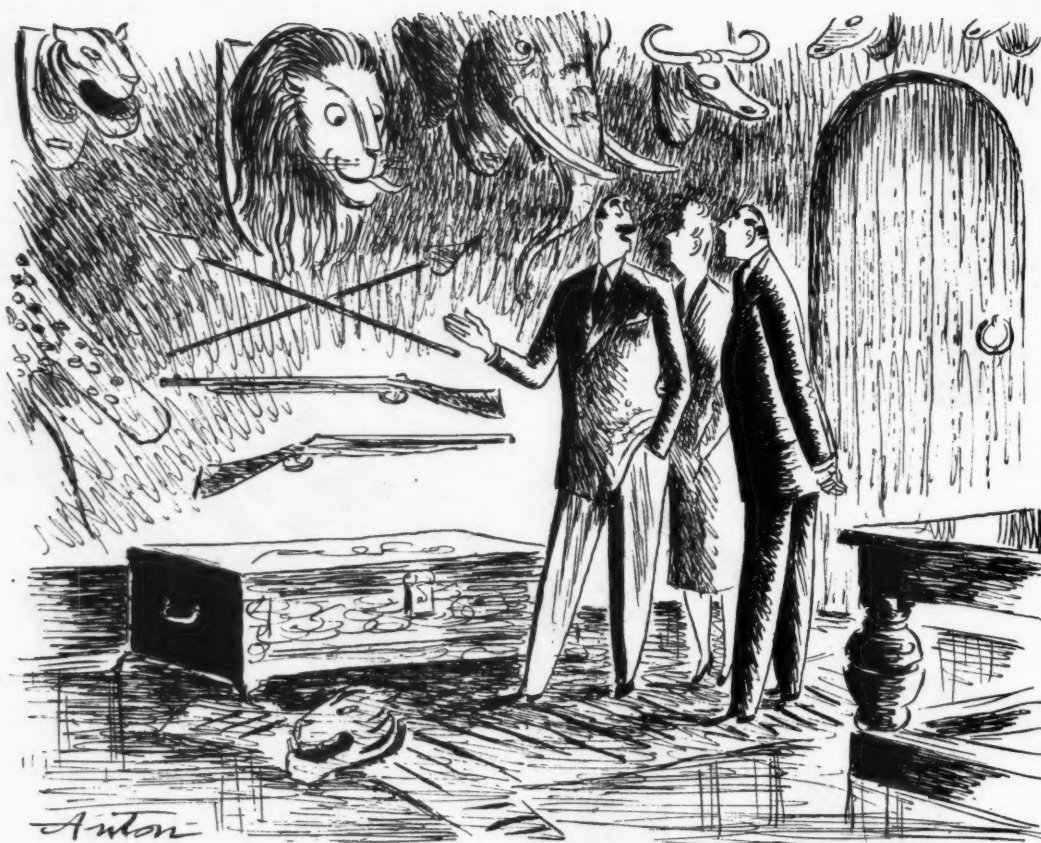
The captain, as far as I can see with my cheeks blown out in this peculiar way, is smiling appreciatively.

H. F. E.



THE ELEVENTH HOUR

"Throw out the che-i-ld? No, never!"



"This one was under the impression that I'd used up all my ammunition."

H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

THIS Fragment had its *fons* and also its *origo* in a fit of despair which overcame me when playing with a model printing set I was giving to the Twins as a Christmas present. It went by clockwork and one turn of the handle would keep it going for hours and hours. I printed all the ordinary things, like "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the quick brown fox" and "Seven hundred and twenty hours hath September," etc.; but still insatiable is what it was, so I tossed in a hunk of Drama, which brought it to heel with a click.

MY LOVE IS LIKE A RED, RED PINK.

(The scene is a mountain hut, the floor littered with ice-axes and climbers, who suddenly notice a small man in the corner.)

FIRST MR. VINCENT. And who, pray, are you, sir?

SMALL MAN. A lover of valleys who has lost his way. I do not care for this at all, no lushness, the streams don't purl, nothing nestles. I am sure I should have turned left at the cross-roads.

FIRST MR. VINCENT. If you seat yourself on that glacier it will return you smoothly to your base, while giving you time to admire the view.

[Exit SMALL MAN, as if with a lingering doubt.]

GUIDE ANDREAS. It will be a lovely day to-morrow. The fleecy clouds will caress our cheeks, and all will be joy and rapture.

GUIDE TOMASINO. There will be the hell of a blizzard.

LITTLE WILKINS. As usual, the expert evidence is in conflict, and what I always say is, when in doubt follow the plain man. His commonsense methods are just as likely to be right as the ukases of the self-styled specialist. Speaking as one of these plain men myself, I should say to-morrow's weather will be middling.

FIRST MR. VINCENT. All this Law-of-Averages, Middle-of-the-Road, Statesmanlike-Compromise business is shown up for the nonsense it is when you apply it to pharmacy. I suppose the plain man would—

LEFTY. One of these guides is more likely to be right than any ignoramus, however plain. After all, they have got experience and lore handed down from their ancestors, and possibly a book about it all at home. It is our job merely to decide which of the two inspires us with more confidence.

PATROL LEADER RINKWORT. Obviously Andreas. Look at that leathery countenance, those ice-blue eyes, those scars of honourable service.

FIRST MR. VINCENT. As the scars are presumably evidence that he has frequently fallen off things, or had them fall on him, I don't see they are any reason for confidence at all. Now Tomasino has a smooth unlined countenance and a general air of ease and softness, which are fair evidence that he has always gone everywhere by the safest possible route and avoided accidents. If he says the weather is going to be bad we had better spend to-morrow in here, blancing our equipment and writing up our diaries.

PATROL LEADER RINKWORT. We ought to welcome a storm. Surely the ideal is to complete the journey, but only just. Indeed, if all the party survive, the climb seems to lose some of its bloom.

FIRST MR. VINCENT. That is a very self-indulgent attitude to take. I always want as many people as possible to share the fun at the top. The true mountain-lover has a place in his heart for the funicular.

LEFTY. The part which appeals to me is not so much the slithering about on slopes, which I can do just as well over the tiles of my Reigate home, as the songs and tales round the camp fire.

PATROL LEADER RINKWORT. The only justification of the sing-song is to steel one for the rigours of the following day. For that reason I favour long, loud songs.

GUIDE ANDREAS. It is obviously an occasion for folk-music, and as the only folk here, Tomasino and I will do the bulk of the singing.

GUIDE TOMASINO. Speak for yourself. I am a technician. The balladry of the Managerial Revolution is written by Cole Porter.

Enter a PARACHUTIST

PARACHUTIST. Oh, you dear people, could you please tell me the very shortest way down this mountain?

PATROL LEADER RINKWORT. We are more interested in the longest way up.

PARACHUTIST. I assure you it's a remarkably dull mountain on top. I observed it closely as I descended. What really attracts me is the prospect of food, drink and slippered comfort in the luxury hotels at the foot.

GUIDE ANDREAS. Try the Hoppelhofer—all little menu-cards in silver stands and girls dressed as peris to take your umbrella.

GUIDE TOMASINO. Certainly not. You must go to Ritti's Bar Residence—real chipolatas on teak sticks and a music-box that plays "The Cries of London."

PARACHUTIST. I assume that whoever wins my custom for his favourite hot-spot gets commission on my bill, so let's see which of you can get me off this mountain first.

GUIDES. This way. Easy does it. Turn right. Turn left. I'll give you a push.

[Exit GUIDES, each holding one of the PARACHUTIST'S arms.]

FINIS



NORMAN MANSBRIDGE

"There isn't a bottle in the ship."

From the Chinese

THE houses are plain and grey;
The windows and the shutters
Require much paint:
And by the rules of Beauty
Written in the Book
Of Chang Lo Fen
It could hardly be said
That they attain
To the highest standard.
The sanitary arrangements
Are simple.
The street below
Is without doubt dirty;
Soapy water
Flows in the gutters,
And in this the incautious traveller
From time to time
Plunges his foot.
There is a frightful noise.
The oxless carts,
Moving among the people
With no reverence
For the people's ancestors
Or their descendants,

Imitate the cries
Of innumerable dragons.
Calm, repose, meditation
Are all out of the question,
Though those on foot,
It is true,
Move here and there
Before the oxless carts
Without seeming to see them.
Everywhere
There are signs
In coloured characters
Inviting the traveller
To eat this,
Or drink that;
And of such adornments
There is no commendation
In the Book of Chang Lo Fen.
Yet the houses are beautiful,
All is beautiful,
For these are the houses
The same old houses,
Still bravely standing
By the harbour of Dieppe.
Here, too,

Untouched by the enemy,
Is the little eating-place
Where we ate the great fish,
The famous fish,
Before the enemy came.
The hostess remembers us,
And we embrace.
We eat the great fish again,
Set in a circle
Of little mussels
And delicate shrimps.
There is wine,
Much wine,
And a dish of butter
Like a moon of butter.
But listen,
The ship,
Like a sad cow,
Summons us.
Yesterday we crossed the ocean;
To-day we return.
It is a long way to go
For two meals.
But it is worth it:
For this is France. A. P. H.

My Father's Factory

ALTHOUGH my father has worked at the same factory for nearly twenty-five years and has recently become its managing director, I have rarely had an opportunity to see him in action.

I have attended the firm's social functions, and duly visited each new wing that has been added to the main building, but always after working hours when the machines were silent and the workers gone. The actual operation of the plant remained a mystery to me. My father's office, his work, his life away from home, were surrounded by an aura of glamour and importance from the time I was a small child until December 1946.

Unconsciously I had always accepted that my father's office was of greater importance than anything else in our family life. It took precedence even over illness; frequently over his own, always over mine or my mother's. The factory was the source of our income, the evil spirit of our private life, the altar at which my parent worshipped. I had come to think of it as unlike other offices.

It never occurred to me that there was any resemblance between my father's office and the newspaper editorial office in which I first went to work. Compared with his, my office was a pleasant place in which I met my friends and passed the days. It

was not important like that of the factory. The London Public Relations Office of the U.S. Navy in which I spent most of the war years was also quite unlike that other—serious—office. Despite the days of honest toil in the Navy building, it had a musical-comedy atmosphere about it not at all on the same scale of seriousness as my father's place of work.

On December 10th 1946 I had occasion to accompany my father to work and to wait for him until 10.15 A.M., when we were both to drive to London. I was hesitant at first about waiting in his office and offered to remain outside in the car. It quite surprised me to find he considered me sufficiently adult to enter the sacred precincts during working hours. I followed him as unostentatiously as possible and seated myself quietly in an arm-chair with a magazine.

The commissioner took my father's coat and hat and inquired whether he should bring in the tea. He was instructed to bring it at 10 A.M. and departed. My father pressed the buzzer on his desk and asked for his secretary.

When the secretary came in I raised my head from my magazine and, in the interests of manners, muttered a shamefaced good morning. It occurred to my father that I was not acquainted with his secretary and he introduced us.

Still anxious to efface myself I spoke to her briefly and was alarmed at the way in which she immediately embarked on a conversation while my father waited at his desk. Nervously I brought the conversation to a close and returned to my magazine.

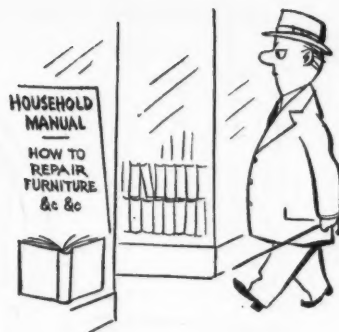
The secretary sat down beside the desk and opened her notebook. My father picked up a pile of small, thin books and handed them to her. "I want you to divide these between Mr. Davies, Mr. Eden, Mr. Roberts and Mr. Stokes," he said. "If they can't sell all the tickets by the day of the Christmas Draw they must be returned, but tell them to try." He picked up another pile of similar books and gave them to her. "I've bought these," he said, "but I want you to divide the tickets between my wife, my daughter, myself, yourself, your assistant and my telephone operator."

The secretary thanked him and counted the tickets in each book. She pointed out that there were a great many. "All right, then," said my father, "you'd better include the receptionist and Miss Rogers and that girl in the canteen who waits on me—what's her name?"

"Betty Writer," said the secretary. "Betty Who?"

"Writer. W-R-I-T-E-R."

"Hm," said my father. "Funny name. Is she?"



"I don't know, sir," said the secretary.

"Well, anyway, give some to Betty," said my father, obviously registering the name for future use.

Somebody knocked on the door, put his head round it and disappeared again.

"Wilson," shouted my father, "come in; I want you."

Wilson returned and approached the desk. For a few moments their voices buzzed above my head while I read my magazine, but it was difficult to concentrate and I found myself listening to them.

"... next Wednesday," said my father.

"That's the day of the Christmas Draw, sir," said Wilson, and my father agreed that next Wednesday, then, would not do.

"Of course," said Wilson, "they're a much better team than we are—we couldn't possibly hope to beat them; but I believe we could play them at cricket next summer, so I thought we might get in touch with them now."

For some minutes this discussion continued, and then something new occurred to my father.

"Is Mrs. Hamilton leaving to-day?" he inquired, and was told that she was. "How is the new man?" he pursued. "Any good?"

"Yes, sir," said Wilson. "Everybody seems to like him very much."

Wilson then left, having first been handed one of the books of tickets for the Christmas Draw, with instructions to sell them by Wednesday.

My father turned back to his secretary, telling her to call Mr. Davies and arrange for a meeting later in the day to discuss the annual wage increases. He then handed her a parcel containing children's toys and asked her to have them delivered to Mr. Eden in Accounts, whose wife was giving a Christmas party for some local children. He dismissed the secretary, who came back a moment later to say that if he was going to the

London office to-day perhaps—he would take with him Mr. John's ashtray, which had been replated in the factory. A minor argument took place as to whether the ashtray belonged to Mr. John of the London office, or Mr. Henry of the same organization.

The secretary disappeared again and my father cleared his desk of all superfluous documents by placing them in drawers. He then rose and crossed the room to another big desk, took out a bunch of keys from his pocket, opened a drawer of the desk, and removed two bottles of gin. He placed the gin on his own desk and locked the drawer of the second desk. He picked up the bottles of gin and left the office.

The commissionaire came in with a tray of tea, milk, sugar and two cups. He asked me if I would pour out the tea and went away again.

My father returned, without the gin, and drank a cup of tea. He then poured himself another cup and crossed the room to a large steel closet. Once again taking out his keys, he opened the closet and removed an empty medicine-bottle. He crossed back to his desk, poured the remainder of the milk from the jug into the medicine bottle, and replaced the bottle in the closet with his hat and coat so that he would remember to take it when he left for home.

Then he showed me a brochure of a house which a friend was in the process of buying, and studied the twelve sepia photographs of a calendar for 1947 sent to him by the manager of the Danish office. We then left for London.

My father's factory is a well-known and prosperous concern. It has a good record and performed extraordinary feats under appalling war-time conditions. The executives all work extremely hard and are rarely home before seven or eight at night. When present industrial difficulties are overcome, the factory will no doubt make money hand over fist.





"I thought there was another step."

More About Words

ONE of the things about words that I didn't bring into my last article was the question of those two prominent features of our language, abbreviations and initials. An abbreviation may be defined as either a sensible way of saying a silly word like "taximeter-cab" or a convenient form of Latin words like "etc." Everyone knows that "etc." is Latin because it is pronounced "tsetra," but by now it has grown to look so like a complete word that people have found it necessary to abbreviate it still further to "&c.," though only printers find this saves time. It is less trouble to type an "e" and a "t" than to hunt up the &, while a hand-written & calls for too much skill with the bottom loop. There is also a special abbreviation for a hand-written "and" which looks like an instruction for an embroidery-stitch, which is perhaps why the literary don't think a lot of it. Other familiar abbreviations are "i.e.," "e.g." and "viz.," and any readers knowing what "e.g." stands for may consider themselves very scholarly for nowadays. Abbreviations like "hanky" and "doggywog" are mentioned for the fact that more people use them than would say they do, and I must include "South Ken." for its firm hold on ticket-buyers. People saying "Picc. Circ." do so with far less confidence.

THE modern tendency of initials to be worked up into pronounceable words is well known, but I should remark that it is one thing to make free with these words in conversation and another to stand up to them in quizzes. As for the clumps of letters some people have after their names to denote some kind of hard work, these are an endless source of wondering what they mean, indirect swank, doubt

in addressing envelopes and practice in writing capitals. The initials on council barrows, litter-bins and so on have always been popular because they provide a nice touch of local colour and are easy to work out, but perhaps the most popular initials of all are those on the fronts of guards and porters, because they mean that, at the moment anyway, everything is going to be all right.

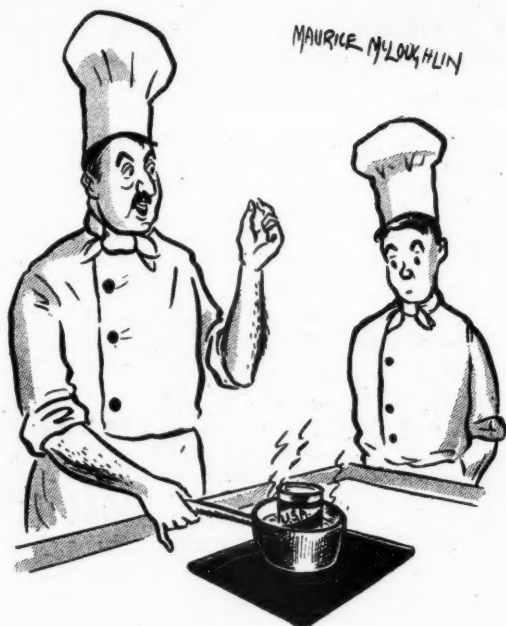
I OUGHT to say something about foreign words. The undeniable fact that all foreign words have an English meaning—for example, we know that when the Romans decided on the word *mensa* they had "table" in their minds because that is what *mensa* means—this undeniable fact does not prevent the use of many foreign words in their original form. I don't mean only things like "e.g." and "viz.," but *je ne sais quoi* and *vox populi* and all the other occasions which force the most unemphatic author to push the typewriter carriage back and bang away at the underlining key until, as far as can be seen from down there, the end of the word heaves in sight.

If my readers don't mind yet another bit about typewriters (which, after all, depend for their very existence on words) I will add that they can always tell when underlining is happening on a nearby typewriter by the sudden fast hammering, the abrupt silence and the neck-stretching. Going back to our subject, I should say that the dividing line between the quotations simple folk don't need to look up and those they know they ought to is somewhere about *at dolce far niente*.

Much has been said lately about foreign words on menus but little about the way unassuming eaters are thus kept off good food. The growing tendency to call the waiter's bluff by asking what a word means is significant, but what interests philologists is the typical way most people's restaurant vocabularies remain as fixed as most people's favourite poets.

A feature of foreign words of all kinds is, I need hardly remind my readers, their accents. Some very foreign words have the most unexpected accents, but as only the accents on French words are known much about I shall keep to them. These consist mainly of one going to the left or right according to which end you start, and another doing the opposite. Each is the right one to use if the other is wrong. There is also an accent that looks like a little hat but is commonly known as a circumflex. Most people are moderately hazy about the circumflex, but would agree that it looks best on the letter "o." Finally there is a twiddle which occurs occasionally under the letter "c" and is very successful with the right sort of fountain-pen. The general attitude towards accents may be summed up as a vague idea that they are a lot of trouble but finish off a foreign word like nothing else.

RETURNING to our own language, I shall now say some hard things about the word "melody." The history of this word is interesting. Up to a few years ago the public thought little of it, except, if they attended those classes where you hop round the room and sing *do* whenever you hear middle C, as something to do with harmony. Otherwise it was not often heard but quite satisfactory in mildly poetic contexts, if a bit on the sticky side. But now the public is almost at the stage of saying "what a pretty melody" when it means "what a nice tune." Philologists explain that this is the direct result of the invention of crooning. They say that the word occurs in seven out of every ten songs crooned—as if everyone didn't know it—and that the other three are brought into line by the band-leader getting the word into the announcement. They think that crooners use it because it can sound



"... then simmer gently, until the label curls at the edges."

unhappy, and that band-leaders use it because working in that atmosphere is bound to affect them. Another thing philologists say (acting entirely on their instincts) is that using "melody" for "tune" is not going to make the world a happier place. This is all I have to say about the word "melody," except to add that people who think it a lovely word will not have agreed with me.

I SHALL end with some general points; for example, the misty situation concerning capital letters. In theory a capital letter makes a proper noun; and a proper noun may be defined as a word that gets thrown out at Lexicon. "Birmingham," for example, though a magnificent effort, would be disqualified at once unless the players were the etymologically happy-go-lucky sort that don't usually play Lexicon. Capital letters, as I was saying, denote proper nouns; but there is what philologists might call a modern tendency to put capital letters before ordinary nouns if it were not that the tendency was far more marked in olden days. Another point is the usefulness of "sesquipedalian" and similar words. They are there to impress their readers and hearers as much as their users; though "sesquipedalian" itself is rarely heard in conversation for reasons my readers, if they try it out, will find obvious. My last point is the interesting fact that people who write a "g" or a "y" with a loop and those who give it a stalk, while naturally enough ranging themselves in opposing camps, are no more likely to feel superior to the other side than to wonder every now and then if it is too late to change over.

Vindication of the Law of Averages.

"Half of the 40,075,000 U.S. family units got more income than the average figure, and the other half got less."

"S. Wales Evening Post."

Past Addresses

THE road lies broad, and in its fallen pride
Grimly recalls the glories that have been;
Large houses stand (well back) on either side,
Nobly detached with lots of room between.
The stucco peels, the windows all are blind,
Dead are the façades, and no doubt you'd find
Things even worse if you could get behind.

Those prosperous front doors have long been shut,
The steps look risky to the casual eye,
Yon chimneys, erst so rich in smoke and smut,
Emit no foulness on the genial sky,
And all around the unshorn jungle creeps
With none to check, while clumsy rubbish heaps
Offend the once important carriage sweeps.

Yet here was dignity. From yonder door
"Father," a thing of whiskered opulence,
Passed to his daily doings. Here, of yore,
"Mother," upholstered at no small expense,
Would sally forth correctly to embark
To drive as fashion bade her round the park,
Causing, with any luck, some small remark.

They had their young and amply were they staffed,
And for their revels when in festive mood
Substantial cooks employed their highest craft
To dish what courses of what solid food,
And then the mild digestive music rose
To pass the fatted guests to their repose.
All, all has gone, has passed. It only shows.

And yet I think that still at dead of night
A spectral Master walks those empty rooms;
Still, in caparison of ghostly white,
An immaterial Mistress faintly looms;
Dim whispering sounds are borne upon the air,
And shadowy maids get busy here and there
Or lift frail scuttles upward, stair by stair.

DUM-DUM



An Innocent in Britain

(Mr. Punch's special correspondent is on tour to find out how the land lies for visitors from overseas.)

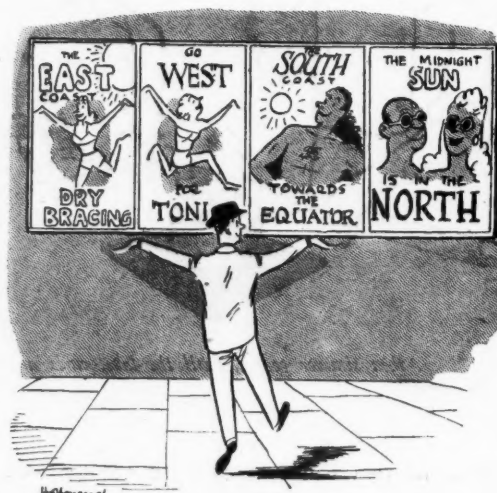
VI—Our Littoral is So Bracing.

ACCORDING to Doctor Transome (or was it Boulle-meir?) what happens is this. In his thirtieth year, or thereabouts, the British subject undergoes metamorphosis: the stuff of indecision melts away and he becomes obdurate and inflexible in his likes and allegiances. He writes off for the illustrated guides and brochures, digests them thoroughly and finally takes unto himself a boarding-house. Henceforth, for year after year, he serves it faithfully for better or worse. And that is why the British holiday-maker knows his resort like the back of his landlady's kimono or hair-net.

It is most peculiar. Abroad the Briton is renowned as a globe-trotter, a mad dog who revels in the midday sun: at home he is a model of caution and commonsense. His annual cock-stride to the sea is planned down to the last detail and invested with all the ritual of an eastern ceremonial. He takes the same train (the same coach if possible), applauds the same concert party on the pier, erects his deck-chair by the same groyne, builds the same sand-castles, sends off the same coloured postcards . . . But you can read it all for yourselves in Transome (or Boulle-meir) and begin to understand some of our seaside oddities

the West Coast tonic and happy-go-lucky, and Scotland . . . well, Scottish and Caledonian. And then there's Ulster, if my stomach will stand the crossing. So, you see, there's plenty of choice.

There are differences of climate, but not really very marked. The east will tell you quite truthfully that it is



"... erects his deck-chair by the same groyne . . ."

—the aspidistra and the wobbling soprano, for instance. The concrete pill-boxes, the unpainted proms with their ugly bomb-scars, the empty slot-machines, the hydrated ice-cream and the fantastic prices should need no explanation.

Still, there's plenty of fun and beauty to be had if you know where to look. Britain has three coasts—three coasts and Scotland, and each of them has its particular set of charms and virtues. The East Coast is said to be bracing and carefree, the South Coast invigorating and gay,

drier than the west, and the west will counter with the information (meteorologically sound) that most of its rain falls conveniently between dusk and dawn. The south claims to be nearest to the equator and boasts of its fine summer days, while Scotland edges its way nearer to the midnight sun and tells of people in the Shetlands reading newspapers out-of-doors right round the clock. It doesn't say which newspapers.

Sea-bathing in Britain is not quite the frolic it is at Miami, Santa Monica, Palm Beach or Coney Island, and I strongly advise you, Mrs. Upscheider, to put out careful feelers before you plunge. For what it is worth, I will outline my own method of taking a dip. After a heavy and warming lunch I set out across the stone's-throw from "Seaview" to the beach. In ten minutes I am round the gasworks and alongside the allotments. A short cut through the cemetery to the railway sidings, down the High Street and across the prom and I am there, paying my shilling for a bathing-hut. I strip quickly and smear the body thickly with grease. A sip of brandy and I am ready. Now I stride down to the water's edge, stopping every few seconds to look back and take accurate bearings of the hut and map a return route through the litter of deck-chairs and sprawlers. Then I stumble into the bracing fluid and remain there until my plasma has solidified. With luck I am thawed out again within the hour.

There are days, however, when the sea is warmish. The change may have something to do with the double tide at Southampton or with friction on the French coast. Anyway, it is perceptible. May I add in all sincerity that palm and yucca grow on the Cornish Riviera and that the temperature figures for Penzance are only just behind those for Nice.

Most of the beaches on the South Coast are pebbled and very hygienic. The pebbles are usually arranged or sorted into standard sizes and disposed in convenient bands from the cliff to the water. But then, you may not be as keen on pebble-throwing as we are.

This week I elbowed my way along the stretch of coast from Dover to Exeter through more than a dozen resorts. Mrs. Upscheider said that Dover was "out of this world," which, I take it, is pretty strong praise. I explained that as "Hell-fire Corner" during the war it very nearly *was*, and that one-third of its houses had been destroyed by the bombardment. We examined the Shakespeare Cliff where Miss Franklin quoted *Lear* at length. It was here (and you don't get this sort of thing in the ordinary guide-books, let me tell you) that excavations were once started for a Channel tunnel. An old bath-chair case gave us this information—an old gout who still managed his cinque ports a day. He was right on the spot in 1890 when the tunnelling was suspended and the engineers, drilling aimlessly to keep their hands in, probed vertically and struck coal. And there on the jetty was proof positive, in black and white—coal and chalk. There's the romance of industry for you!

Miss Franklin was still quoting *Lear* when we reached Hastings. Seven miles inland from the landing beaches we found the village of Battle where . . . yes, quite right, quite right. We inspected the Abbey, re-enacted the Senlac story with Mrs. Upschieder and Miss Franklin as doughty huscarles, and returned to the coast for tea and crumpets at the de la Warr Pavilion.

Like Brighton and Cheltenham, Weymouth owes almost everything to royal patronage and has paid immense homage in statuary to its benefactor, a gentleman who crosses my path on this tour rather more often than is

or "The English —," and the idea is spreading. It's going to make things terribly difficult and complicated at the booking-office.

We saw the "English Naples" and admired its charms rationally, without wishing to die. In particular I liked the sands, which shelve so gradually that it is possible to



The Senlac story



good for Anglo-American relations. People who are never satisfied with anything British call Weymouth the "English Naples" and go to astonishing lengths to find convincing parallels. You know the kind of thing—"Half close your eyes, dear, and see if that doesn't look just a bit like Vesuvius," and "Can't you almost smell the garlic, darling?" Well, I don't like it. A dozen of our resorts already advertise themselves as "The — of the North"

bathe a hundred yards out without getting wet above the ankles. A tremendous boon this for the family man.

The paddle-steamer *Victoria* steams (paddles?) daily along the coast from Weymouth to Lulworth Cove. She was at Dunkirk, did her bit on D Day and has paddled thousands of P.O.W.s since, but according to her crew she suffers far more from trippers than she ever did from the Germans. And I can well understand it. Dropping cherry-stones down the ventilators!

At Lulworth Miss Franklin was out in 37 (a three at the short seventh) on the miniature golf-course above the cliffs. Two up on Mrs. Upscheider. Coming home, though, the "Babe" chipped into the Channel at the "Stair Hole," forfeited the half-crown deposit on her ball and retired, hurt.

We missed the attractions of Wick-Ferry, listed as "Snack-bar, swimming, deck-chairs . . . children's paddling-pool, car-park," and got only the merest glimpse of Kingston in the Purbecks. A pity that, for our curiosity had been roused by the headline "SPINNING AS AN ANTIDOTE TO SMUGGLING" and by the story of a Mr. Pitt, philanthropist, who turned eighteenth-century Kingstonians from their evil ways into the paths of righteousness by a clever bit of occupational therapy.

And of course we missed Wimbledon. It wasn't my fault: I suggested a return to London several times, but none of my American friends would entertain the idea. "Where's the sense in making a special trip to Wimbledon?" said Mrs. Upscheider. "We can see them all back home in the States, can't we?" There's not much you can say in reply to that.

HOD.



"Yes, I DID once bear of an unfurnished room, but as usual—no pets, no pianos."

Song of the Man in the Middle

THE left-hand side of England
is different from the right
as ten to twelve from twelve-
fifteen,
as green of oats
from barley-green,
as Gimingham
from Trimingham,
as chalk from Chinese white.

As cocker is from springer,
as mild from bitter beer,
the Pole star from its pointers,
roeibuck from fallow deer;
as stitchwort is
from speedwell,
as rowan from wild cherry,

Coachman from Silver Doctor,
a coble from a wherry;
as greenfinches from chaffinches,
as Cheshire is from Cheddar cheese,
as Cox's Orange pippin
from Bramley Seedling's bite
the left-hand side of England
it differs from the right.

Through half the "coloured counties"
I've watched the world wheel by,
with here a field of mustard,
and there a crop of rye;
past Tennysonian willows
and elms straight out of Brooke—
across my left-hand neighbour's hat
my right-hand neighbour's book:

this river winds at random
just like a child, in fact,
who hears the cuckoo calling—
but daisy-chains distract;
yet straight is that canal-stretch
that road
which like the sword
of Rome cuts through the village
and thrusteth for the ford:

Oh, different, subtly different
as swift from swallow's flight—
is either side of England, the lovely
face of England:
but the clever ones in the corner seats
can see but left
or right.

R. C. S.



BETROTHED

"But the standing toast that pleased the most . . ."

MONDAY, July 7th.—

There were many empty seats in the House of Commons to-day, and this circumstance puzzled some onlookers. And then they realized that the delicacy which always prompts English and Welsh Members to keep away from Scottish debates was in operation. For the business of the day was a discussion on the Scottish Town and Country Planning Bill.

This gives the Government power to control the planning of both Town and Country—and most other things, it seems. It was all very technical and the Scottish Members seemed to enjoy a "good crack" over its intricacies. But the most enthusiastic believer in Scottish affairs would scarcely have claimed that it made an exciting evening for the casual listener.

Before this, Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, Lord President of the Council, who is also O.C. Economic Affairs, announced the names of the Council of experts, business men and Civil Servants which is to work with him in the planning of the new Britain.

And a few Members offered additions to your scribe's Dictionary of Curious Sayings, as under:

Mr. de la Bère: I KNOW I am right!

Sir Thomas Moore: How does one stagger an hour?

Captain Harry Crookshank: If the Minister cannot intervene technically, can't he give broad hints?

Sir Waldron Smithers: As a result of two years of Socialist Government, we have been compelled to import coal and—BEER!

TUESDAY, July 8th.—No one could have complained of the attendance to-day, for the benches on both sides of the House of Commons were crowded. The subject was the economic situation and the Government's imports programme.

Mr. ANTHONY EDEN was first speaker for the Opposition, and he presented his case with his customary blend of forcefulness and reasonableness. His case was that Britain must help herself back to economic stability and the firm ground of trade and industry. We could not, he said, afford to be the permanent pensioners of the United States of America—however generous that great nation proved herself to be.

He ended with an appeal to the Government to put aside Party considerations in the pursuit of national unity and well-being. This point was taken up at once by Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, making his first major

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done:

Monday, July 7th.—House of Commons: Planning Scotland.

Tuesday, July 8th.—House of Commons: Economics Once More.

Wednesday, July 9th.—House of Commons: Cars—and Taxes.

Thursday, July 10th.—House of Commons: The Future of India is Planned.

speech since his indisposition. Mr. MORRISON interpreted the reference to unity as a plea for a coalition Government, and promptly rejected it. This drew a cheer from all parts of the House, and Mr. EDEN complained that Mr. MORRISON was "putting a gloss" on what he had said. Whereupon Mr. MORRISON replied cheerfully that, if he had, Mr. EDEN had rubbed the gloss off again—so all was well.

Mr. MORRISON's speech was grave—but the House was delighted to see from the vigour of his delivery that his



Impressions of Parliamentarians

11. Mr. J. D. MACK (Newcastle-under-Lyme)

illness had left no trace. If the speech, was a little more serious than usual, that was due to the seriousness of the subject. If it was, at times, a trifle over-contentious—well, the same could be said of many of the speeches on both sides of the House.

The burden of the Minister's speech was that it was the first duty of the Government to see that the people of Britain were producing as much as possible, were in good health and good heart. There might have to be more cuts in imports—there might even have to be severe cuts, tragic though that would be.

There was dead silence in the House when Mr. MORRISON spoke dramatically of "the striking of the twelfth hour" in the coming autumn, and of the vital need to sort out the world's economic troubles before then. But we in Britain were entitled to face the future,

whatever it held, with confidence.

The House liked the mixture of confidence, realism, cheer and challenge, and there was hearty applause.

Mr. DAVID ECCLES, however, found the contents of the speech "appalling" and Mr. CLEMENT DAVIES's word was "incredible."

The debate drifted, from time to time, into Party polemics, but, on the whole, it was a thoughtful and serious discussion of a thought-provoking and serious issue. Mr. OLIVER STANLEY wound up for the Opposition, declaring roundly that the Government's only policy was to have no policy, but to wait, Micawberlike, for something to turn up—to make no policy necessary.

In the circumstances it was inevitable that Mr. HUGH DALTON, the Fighting Chancellor, should make a few political remarks in reply. He briskly reminded the Opposition that, not so long ago, they had been demanding a reduction in austerity—and now they wanted more. And they would probably have more. Tobacco imports, for instance, were to be cut from £70,000,000 to £40,000,000.

The whole world, said the Chancellor, was like a group of children playing marbles, and one was winning the lot. When that happened, the game would have to stop, unless the winner handed out some of the marbles to the others—just to keep the game going. This homely illustration seemed to please the House, which evidently found it more understandable than a later reference to "multilateral paralysis."

Someone predicted that schoolboys of the future would read in their history-books about "The Dalton Marbles."

Having laid it down that Britain must meet all her imports by making exports, Mr. DALTON sat down, and the debate ended. It had been a useful clearing of the air—but a good deal of fog seemed to remain, all the same.

WEDNESDAY, July 9th.—There was much talk in the Commons about luxury motor-cars which brought nostalgic expressions into many an eye. Mr. DALTON proposed that the purchase tax on cars costing £1,000 and more should be doubled—from thirty-three-and-a-third to sixty-six-and-two-thirds per cent. of the value. This to encourage makers to send the bigger cars abroad and thus gain dollars and other foreign currency for Britain. Those who bought the few remaining



"I'm from the Institute of Public Opinion, Mr. Methuselah. Do you consider controls will ever be lifted in our lifetime?"

in the home market would have the offsetting advantage of a reduction of annual tax to a flat £10, instead of the old umpteen times 25s. based on horse-power.

Some Members thought this a fine idea—others were doubtful. One Labour Member went so far as to complain that a firm had *reduced* the price of a car model to £999—which he acutely perceived to be just £1 short of £1,000, and therefore at the lower rate of purchase tax. The Chancellor replied that that was O.K. by him, an answer that seemed to worry the complainant not a little.

The Chancellor's plans approved, the House passed on to consider the proposal to permit him to impose a tax on imported films—if he thought this the thing to do, again in the cause of dollar-saving. He said an attempt would be made to assess the earning-power of a film and tax that, but agreed that this would be a "shot in the dark."

Lt.-Comdr. GURNEY BRAITHWAITE, not caring for the prospect of

Mr. DALTON taking shots in the dark all over the place, nor for the new powers he was assuming, objected to the proposal, but it was approved.

Their Lordships were continuing the process of defeating the Government—back, once more, on the Transport Bill. The Government took the defeat with its customary stoic calm.

Members of the Senior Service took with less equanimity a revelation by the Admiralty, in the Lower House, that an issue of *lemonade* made with powder and sugar was included in the assorted drinks available when the Royal Navy received the time-honoured signal "Splice the Main Brace." Officers, R.N. (Ret.), swallowed hard, but said nothing. It was, as Colonel Chinstrap would have said, a deeply moving occasion, sir.

THURSDAY, July 10th.—Members crowded into the House of Commons to-day, expecting some reference to the betrothal of Princess Elizabeth to Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten, announced this morning. But that was

not in accordance with precedent—so nothing was said in public about the item of news the whole world was discussing.

Later on, when Questions had ended, the Prime Minister raised another topic of world-wide interest—the future of India. He moved the Second Reading of the Indian Independence Bill, which sets up the Dominions of India and Pakistan and makes other provisions for the independence of India. Mr. ATTLEE has for long made a close study of the Indian question, and his speech showed deep learning—and deep sympathy for India's aspirations and ambitions.

The House, by and large, was in agreement on the proposals of the Bill, although there was some regret that the ideal solution of a single great Dominion had not been possible. There was a general feeling of relief and pleasure that the long and intimate association of Britain and India was to have a new lease of life in a different and, it is to be hoped, even more lasting form.



"Now let me see—where did we leave off in 1938?"

Me and Veera Discuss Women.

THE other day while I was having a quiet cup of tea in Taffys Caffy with Veera my young lady conductoress she said Sid why is it people are not polite and chivalrous nowadays like they used to be? Well, I said, I suppose there isn't a demand for politeness in the modern world. If there was, I said, do you think it would still cost nothing?

That is what I like about you, Veera said, you are so philosophical like those other clever chaps Joad and his friend Plato. Oh, I said, I don't know as I am quite as clever as what they are. After all, I said, they have written books. Still, Veera said, they probably wouldn't make much of a do of driving a bus so I think you more or less even out. Anyway, she said, I was talking to my friend Iris only last night and I said I reckon Sid

Cuffey ought to write down his thoughts and philosophy for the benefit of future posterity. Yes, I said, if posterity ever plucks up enough courage to live in this world when us present people have finished chivvying it from pillar to post mortem.

If you wrote a book about what is wrong with the world, Veera said, what would you begin by starting with? I would probably start with women, I said, although of course it is being able to finish with them completely that shows a chap has got a really strong character.

But women differ a lot, Veera said, there isn't really one alike. Yes, I said, there are different categories such as good and popular, pretty and natural and cetra, but I think the only two kinds are the terrible ones and the ones I do not know yet.

Women can not be as rosey as what you make out, Veera said, otherwise why do so many clever chaps marry them? My dear Veera, I said, getting married and going bald are two things some men are doomed to do and there is not anything they can do about it although I am told going bald is not so bad when you get used to it.

When I hear a chap being as cynical about women as what you are, Veera said, my blood literally boils. I always thought you were a decent sort of chap whom chivalry was not dead in, she said, it is chronic the way men are cynical about women. Well, I said, there is no smoke without fire. There is no smoking without a private income either, she said, but that is not either here or there. Anyway, she said, you men need not think you are perfect. I know we are not, I

said. Mind you, I said, we very easily could be if we wanted to be but we are considerate enough not to try so as to save women from having cricks in their necks through looking up to us.

Oh, she said, so I suppose you do not agree women are equal to men? I am afraid they are equal to almost anything these days, I said. I said there has been too much talk about this equality business and of course most of it has been said by women. Why of course? Veera said. Because women have got the knack of being able to talk even when they have not got anything to say, I said. Personally, I said, I think half the trouble in this world is caused by the female of the species and the other half by the speeches of the female. That is not funny, Veera said. It is tragic, I said, but I bet a lot of chaps would agree with me. Most men agree with anything, Veera said, so long as it isn't their wives.

Why is it the women who have such a low opinion of men are always the ones who are so keen on this equality business, I said, it does not seem very logical. Oh, I haven't got a poor opinion of all men, Veera said, only some men. I like Rex Harrison, she said, and James Mason and Clark Gable. A typical woman, I said—you go just for good looks. I like you too, she said. My dear Veera, I said, there is no need for you to prove my point. Mr. Mason, for example, is the intellectual type same as me, I said, but do not tell me you like us for our brains. Well no, Veera said, but don't you try and tell me the chaps who have got girl friends are crazy about them because of their brains either. When a chap is crazy about a girl there has got to be something for him to be crazy about, I said, so that is why most chaps who have got girl friends are not crazy about them because of their brains.

My cousin Ireen is ever so clever, and she has got certificates to prove it, Veera said, but she has not even ever been whistled at. Somewhere in America there is a talking dog, I said, but just because of that I don't go around trying to strike up a conversation with every Pom, Dick or Harry of a dog I see. When you are on the bus and you shout Marble Arch, I said, who is it asks you Is this Marble Arch? The women, Veera said. And when you shout Olverry ti, I said, who is it lets go of everything and falls about in all directions? The women, Veera said. I hope you see my point, I said.

Oh, it is easy enough to run women down, Veera said. You do not have to tell me that, I said, me being a

bus-driver. You know what I mean, Veera said, but all the same I would like to know what you men would do without us women. Us men would very much like to know that too, I said, but unfortunately we do not get the chance to try. It must be awful for you, Veera said all lemony, fighting your way through your female admirers into the garage every morning. I notice you always give me a very sweet smile when you see me anyway, I said. That is not a smile, she said, it is just a lady-like scornful laugh. If us women said what we really thought about you men, she said, you would all feel about knee high to an earwig. Well, I said, I have just said some very vinegary things about women but they are nothing to what us men could say if we said what we thought.

If that is so, Veera said, I can not

understand why men and women do not go around cutting each others' throats. Ah, I said, that is where philosophy comes in, because when you think of how annoying to say the least of it people are you must admit that people must be very good-natured at heart to put up with them.

Yes I see, Veera said, I am sorry I said people are not polite nowadays, and I hope you are sorry for what you said too. Of course I am, I said, and anyway I was only pulling your leg because actually I think women are wonderful. All men do, I said.

Well, dear reader, if you are a man and if you said Too true when you read some of the things I said about women I hope you are now thoroughly ashamed of yourself for believing such things, although *entrez nous* as I am not I do not suppose you are either.



WHATEVER may be said about Mr. HENRY MARSHALL's *Spanish Incident*, at the Embassy, it doesn't lag. On the contrary, it races ahead of us with plot and counter-plot until our senses reel, and much as if we were on a giant-racer at a fair we give up wondering what horror is waiting round the next corner and concentrate deliriously on the present. It is easy to imagine Mr. MARSHALL, who is evidently a whole-hearted believer in surprise, going through his script, exclaiming "Ah, they may catch up on me here. We can't have them working out who's who and what's what. Now, shall we make it a stab in the back or would a nice double double-cross meet the case?" We have to hand it to him that, careless as he is about probabilities and erratic, to say the least, in his conception of the behaviour of secret agents, he does succeed in foxing us to the end at any rate on one of his main issues. The business in hand is the capture for a war-crimes court of a high-ranking she-Nazi who has managed to debunk herself in time and reach Spain. This delicate task is entrusted to three of his ex-officers by a hush-hush Colonel (promoted, it would appear, since the printing of the programme) at the War Office, who rather oddly sends them off knowing that one is in the pay of a post-Hitler Nazi movement. To discover his identity is vital, but so is the kidnapping of the girl, and as taxpayers you may well demand whether the War Office is justified in thus risking the wreck of an important mission when presumably it has easier means of checking up on the integrity of its staff.

Their pockets bulging with bogus documents and their minds with corroborative facts about the canning industry, the lads find themselves the guests of a sinister English trader of Santander. His is the sort of house which glamorous ladies fresh from seasonal inundations enter with dry macintoshes, and in which British agents, loudly discussing their suspicions with scarcely a glance to windward, scatter their trust in a way

At the Play

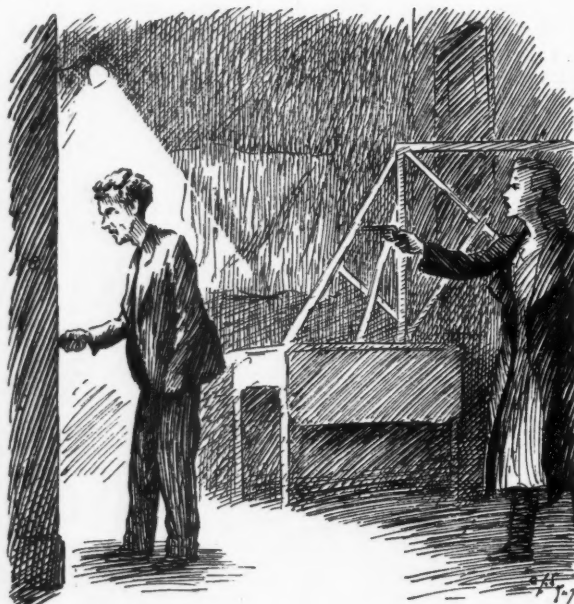
SPANISH INCIDENT (EMBASSY)—MAYA (ARTS)

which I must admit is not devoid of boyish charm. In such a house things boil up quickly, and almost before we have set our teeth and taken a proper grip on the arms of our seats we are off on a wild whirligig of druggings, shootings, knifings and kindred Spanish parlour sports. We may—if we are particularly self-controlled and intelligent—make a fair guess at the lady, but to the end the black sheep of the

gives a spirited performance. As usual on a first night there were a number of questionable characters in the stalls, but whether they were representatives of the Weasand-Slitters' Union or simply international spies at night-school it was very hard to say.

Maya, at the Arts, by M. SIMON GANTILLON and translated by VIRGINIA and FRANK VERNON, is a play, or rather a series of variations, on the theme of prostitution. Considering the subject it is no more sordid than it has to be, and the treatment is serious, but obviously it is not a piece for the general. The central ideas are the tragedy of the prostitute, her emotional and social isolation, her desolate abandonment of past and future, and her rôle as a sort of mother inferior to the Lonely Man. These are worked out partly in realism and partly in a somewhat nebulous symbolism. The scenes in which *Bella*, a quiet, generous woman, talks to different types of client, letting them tell their troubles and doing her best to comfort them, are effective, and the death of her child is moving. So far the author's intentions are perfectly clear; not so, however, his end, in which a Hindu barman, fixing us with a Yoga-clammy eye, intones cosmic utterances interspersed with mad recitals of the recipes of his more esoteric pick-me-

ups. Much as I admire Miss VIVIENNE BENNETT, she is not well cast as *Bella*. She is essentially an actress of refinement and intellect, and this part calls for a coarser and more dominating personality. It also calls for a more consistent accent; Miss BENNETT almost boxes the compass between Doolittle and Higgins. Mr. HEDLEY BRIGGS gives us welcome relief as a comic carpet-peddler, a large cast presents the seamy business with credit and Mr. NORMAN MARSHALL's production brings the squalid atmosphere of a big French port candidly to life. Myself I doubt very much if the play justifies its frankness. ERIC.



[Spanish Incident]

"I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE THAT KIND OF GIRL."

Alan McNott Mr. JOHN McLAREN
Harriet Trevor Miss EILEEN PEEL

M.I. flock might be any of the three. All I shall say about him is that if I were playing his game I should take great pains to let the other side—my side—know when I was coming. It would be safer.

The author's fertility in incident has impetuously outstripped his ability to shape a play, but there is some genuine excitement here, and to its benefit Mr. OLIVER GORDON, who produced, kept his foot firmly on the accelerator. Mr. WYNDHAM GOLDIE as the *Colonel*—no doubt a brigadier by now—sets a good stern note; Mr. JOHN McLAREN, Mr. SHAMUS LOCKE and Mr. NEVILLE MAPP carry out the operation sturdily;

Windows

LET me make it absolutely clear from the start that I have no general prejudice against window cleaners. They are a fine body of men who have played a noble part in our long island story, and but for their efforts the outlook to-day would be much darker even than it is. Nor, so far as the actual cleaning of windows is concerned, have I any complaint against either the Munton-on-Sea Reliable Window Cleaning Company (Fully Insured) or against Bloggs and Rubbard, Practical Window Cleaners (Fully Insured). Yet I have come to dread their monthly visits, because they invariably ruin my day's work.

They are supposed to come on the fourteenth of each month, but it depends on the weather. If they have a run of wet days earlier in the month, then they may not appear until the twentieth, while if the sun has shone consistently they may look in as early as the ninth. Clearly it is impossible for me to go away for a holiday every month from the ninth to the twentieth.

Originally I employed the Reliable Window Cleaning Company, which consists of a man named Flannel and a small boy with a sniff and an extraordinarily large cap. Except for the sniff the small boy is reasonably silent, but Flannel is a man of great conversational powers, and he spends twice as long as necessary cleaning the windows of my study so that he can offer me ideas for stories on a fifty-fifty basis. The stories are highly melodramatic and absolutely littered with bodies and beautiful women. Unfortunately in a weak moment and in order to make him go away I told Flannel that if I had time I would try to use one of his plots, and after that there was no holding him. When he had finished the windows he would come and stand by me as I sat at my typewriter and add various sub-plots to the already impossible original plot.

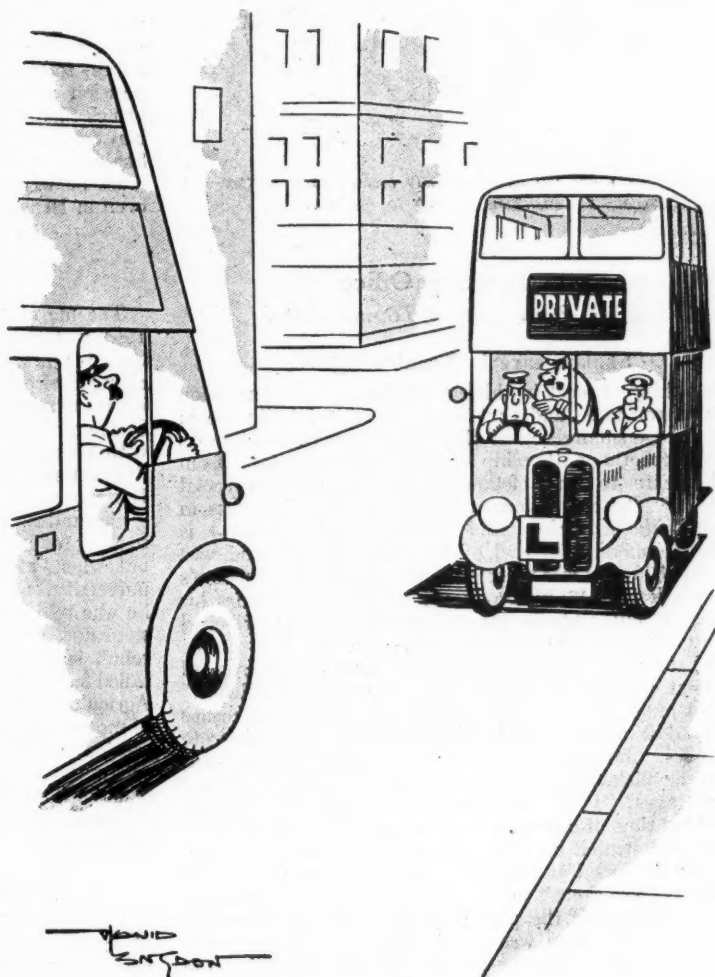
In the end I sent Flannel a cheque for a guinea, pretending that I had sold our joint story in the American market, and intimated that in future, owing to the rising cost of living, I would clean my own windows. Instead I sent for Bloggs and Rubbard.

Bloggs and Rubbard turned out to be a merry pair to whom life was one long song—or, to be more precise, two long songs. Bloggs, who did the out-sides, favoured "Roll Out the Barrel" and Rubbard (insides) carolled the thing from *Madame Butterfly* where the girl gets such a nasty shock when

her lover does not appear. Ours is a small flat with thin walls, and all the time the two men worked it was impossible to escape from both songs at once. The grand climax came when they converged on my study, with *Madame Butterfly* inside and "Roll Out the Barrel" outside, which gave me a splitting headache for the rest of the day.

After three or four visitations from Bloggs and Rubbard I terminated their engagement and decided to clean my own windows—a task which I found much more difficult than it looked.

Unless I rubbed very hard the effect was decidedly smeary, and if I rubbed hard quite a lot of the panes flew clear of their moorings and shot into the street. So when I saw an advertisement in the local paper for a new firm called "Amalgamated Window Cleaners (Fully Insured)" I sent them a postcard and asked them to call, only to find, as I might have guessed, that a few days later a perfect locust-drift of Amalgamated operatives descended on me, consisting of Bloggs, Flannel, Rubbard, and the boy with the large cap and the sniff.



"Right. Now as you pass 'im, take yer right 'and orf the wheel, put yer thumb up, grin, right 'and back again, and on yer go."



"Now this one has an ingeniously devised false bottom—
should modom be considering a trip to the continent."

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Shakespeare in Trouble Again.

ONE thing at least in this age of change and convulsion remains constant, and that is the level of intelligence in that strange subdivision of the human species which seeks to transfer the authorship of Shakespeare's plays from Shakespeare to some fellow-Elizabethan of high social position. The earl favoured by Mr. CLAUD W. SYKES in *Alias William Shakespeare?* (FRANCIS ALDOR, 15/-) is Roger Manners, fifth earl of Rutland. As Rutland was born in 1576, and was therefore sixteen when Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part I*, was produced, Mr. SYKES concedes his precocity, but adduces other instances of early ripened genius, Mozart, for example, who gave his first public recital at five and a half, and Raphael, Burns and Byron, all of whom, by what Mr. SYKES calls "a curious coincidence," died at much the same age as Rutland. *Hamlet* furnishes many additional reasons for the belief that Rutland wrote the plays. James I sent him on an embassy to Denmark, where he picked up a great deal of local colour. When *Hamlet* says, "I will walk here in the hall . . . 'tis the breathing time of day with me," he implies a hall in which a man can stretch his legs, and such, Mr. SYKES tells us, was the Riddersal at Elsinore. When Polonius speaks of Danes as "Danskens" he is establishing beyond question that the author of the play must have visited Denmark. And so on. Rutland was also in Italy, and it was while crossing the Alps that he noticed the sun flattering the mountain tops with sovran eye. In Italy itself he was struck by the way in which Time's fell hand had defaced the rich-proud cost of outworn buried age, and made a mental note of the interest the Florentines took in mathematics ("A great arithmetician, one Michael Cassio, a Florentine"). And so forth. Among the many other reasons

Mr. SYKES finds for identifying Rutland with the author of the plays are that *Othello* expresses the jealousy Rutland, who, it seems, did not consummate his marriage, felt when Sir Thomas Overbury was paying court to Lady Rutland in 1604, and that *Hamlet* holds much the same view of suicide as may be presumed in Rutland, if, as seems likely, he took his own life. All that can be said in favour of Mr. SYKES is that he writes in a brisk light-hearted way, quite free from the dull, stubborn rancour against "the Stratfordian" usual in a book of this kind. Unlike Mr. SYKES, Mr. WILLIAM BLISS cares for Shakespeare's poetry, and writes charmingly on certain aspects of his work, in especial his knowledge and love of flowers. But the conception of Shakespeare as a human being which he develops in *The Real Shakespeare: A Counterblast to Commentators* (SIDGWICK AND JACKSON, 18/-), is only an enfeebled and exaggerated version of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's bluff, downright, albeit lyrical, English gentleman. Mr. BLISS's Shakespeare probably sailed with Drake in the *Golden Hind*, was not a professional actor, though he appears to have acted in two of his friend Ben Jonson's plays, and put more of himself into *Henry V* than into any other of his characters, being, like Henry, a lover of human companionship, easy-going in trifles, tolerant of all men, yet of strong will and instant decision when roused. In his last chapter Mr. BLISS brings Shakespeare down from heaven to offer Mr. BLISS his congratulations. "I leave you my good wishes," Shakespeare says, as he is about to depart, "and if books must be written about me, let them be like yours. For even in Heaven we love to be loved." H. K.

Black Wins

The life of George Washington Carver (PHOENIX HOUSE, 15/-) is a great adventure. Here you have an inspired leader, a prophet both practical and lovable, whose over-riding desire was to redeem his own people through the instrument of their bondage, the agriculture of the Southern States of America. Born a baby slave in 1860, kidnapped with his mother in the aftermath of the War of Secession, "Carver's George" was re-kidnapped by his kindly master. His mother was never seen again. The lad had native genius and that gusto for any skilled handwork that belongs to an age of free improvisation. He met friends everywhere; but when, at twenty-six or so, he proceeded to a small university, undertaking the laundry-work for his keep, he was told that though Indians were admissible, negroes were not. The brilliant academic career founded on this rebuff is described by Mr. RACKHAM HOLT in a sober detailed fashion that its subject, you feel, would have approved. Agriculturally Carver was a pioneer of the most modern of modern schools and the most traditional: a denouncer of erosion, a maker of compost, a workaday mystic seeing soil, animals and man as an indivisible Trinity. To the end the South called its Roosevelt Medallist "Doctor" or "Professor," but never "Mister." "Mister" was reserved for whites. H. P. E.

An Englishman in Wartime Russia

Life in Russia (ALLEN AND UNWIN, 12/6) is an account of conditions in Russia as seen by Mr. JOHN LAWRENCE, who was in Russia from 1942 to 1945 and edited *The British Ally*, a weekly newspaper which was distributed throughout the Soviet Union. As the Russian Government reached its maximum of cordiality towards Great Britain during this period, Mr. LAWRENCE was able to form his impressions of the country in a relatively congenial atmosphere. There is much in his book that should help

to modify the present tendency in England to think of the Russian people only in the mass, and to forget that they are individuals, with much the same feelings, desires, faults and merits as ourselves. The chief difference appears to be in the greater spontaneity of the Russians: "The Russians are intensely and directly interested in other human beings. They lack the wall of reserve which makes every Anglo-Saxon individual into an island of his own." But this spontaneity carries them from one extreme to the other, and when manifested as savagery compares, at least from the victim's standpoint, unfavourably with cooler and milder methods of registering dissent or disapproval. Mr. LAWRENCE has not much to say about the Soviet Government, except that it tends to be too paternal. The principle on which the N.K.V.D. acts is, he says, that it is better nine innocent men should suffer than one guilty man escape. No wonder the Russian intellectual mentioned by Mr. LAWRENCE was puzzled that Mr. Churchill should call politics "great fun."

H. K.

Landed Gentry

The behaviour of newcomers to the ranks of the landed gentry is a subject of perennial interest to novelists. What happened to one such "new boy" you can discover for yourself in Mr. HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL's new novel. By an eccentric but far-sighted will, a Liverpool business man, due to retire, inherits a fine old house and a mortgaged estate in Hampshire. The County waits breathlessly to see if the parvenu will take over. So does the vicar. So do the old servants. So, one supposes, do the farmers and tradesmen and cottagers—but "off." John Terrington duly appears, with a hearty wife and three children. Will he raise pheasants and subscribe to two packs of hounds? Will she go to Molyneux for her frocks? How will Nigel fit in at The House? Will Ethel-Rose bow to her obvious destiny as the fiancée of Alaric Jalland, "a good sportsman and a Guardee"? Mr. VACHELL, with all his wonted dexterity, provides the answers to these conundrums, answers that would make Coke of Norfolk turn in his grave. Read aloud to a long potato-queue, *Rebels* (HUTCHINSON, 9/6) could be guaranteed to pass the time enjoyably, while explaining to the queue itself one reason why it got there.

H. P. E.

Faith Unfaithful

Mr. PAUL GALLICO's second very short novel, *The Lonely* (MICHAEL JOSEPH, 6/-), is extremely simple and, as one would expect from the author of *The Snow Goose*, exquisitely written. It tells the story of a young American airman who has been given some extra leave which he spends with a W.A.A.F. named Patches, daughter of a naval officer. Neither, it is indicated, is "that sort" really. Jerry, the young man, makes it clear that, since he is engaged to Catharine, a boyhood's friend in America, the *affaire* must end with the leave. So it seems to do when they say good-bye at a station, but Jerry gets a lift as passenger in a plane, spends one night with his parents, tells them he wants to marry Patches, listens to piteous and pitiful arguments, dodges a meeting with Catharine and flies home to his second love. All the arguments, spoken and unspoken, are convincing. One is left sympathizing with everyone but most of all (and is this the author's intention?) with the eligible Catharine. This is where the book falls down. We see her only once, through Jerry's eyes, as he skulks in a doorway and she goes by—"lovelier than ever . . . her sunny smile flashing." There seems to be nothing wrong with the girl except that she is

not Patches, who is mouse-like. She is given a raw deal and must get on with it, but we *should* like to know what she thinks and feels about it. One might have been given more chance of judging; and even a little salting of humour would have cheered us up no end. B. E. B.

Fricassée of Bart

What Happened at Hazelwood (GOLLANCZ, 7/6) joins our plus-list of crime stories not so much for the quality of its detection, though that is amusing and fairly original, as for the sophisticated detachment with which it is told. Mr. MICHAEL INNES gets a bizarre character and an over-charged atmosphere with such skill that one is tempted to wonder how he can be bothered with blunt instruments when he carries the guns for the novel proper. Here, in a mansion where *droit de seigneur* and *droit de everything* else are in full feudal operation, we find a gloriously bad baronet messily done to death in his study; a man with a sticky past and so generally detested that motives lie as thick upon the ground as bar sinisters upon his family tree. Shall we fasten our suspicion on the loud-mouthed cousin from Australia who ominously flings a bottle through the portrait of his host just before he dies? On her ladyship, who had ample cause for homicide? On the inscrutable, polyphemic butler, or his son, the groom, bearing so remarkable a likeness to his master? On the vice-hunting Vicar? On the blacksmith's buxom daughter, whose virtue had hung critically in the balance? On the victim's windy brother? Or on one of his preposterous nephews? Our guess is as good as that of Inspector Cadover—an acceptable clue-companion, by the way—but you should be warned that red herrings of the INNES brand are no weakling fish. The book is not only witty, but *bien sec*.

E. O. D. K.



"I just thought you'd be pleased to know that your notice has at last become operable again, madam—I am a hawker."

Late Night Final

THE 10.57, most regular of trains, had not yet clocked in. Knowing its character as I did, I could imagine the fussy agitation with which it must be scurrying towards us through the night. I found a seat on the platform with only one old man on it, and prepared to go into a trance.

"She's going to be very late to-night," he announced confidently.

"What did they say?" I yawned.

"No need for me to go asking them."

"Probably a cow on the line."

"My fault if there is, I'm afraid."

I looked more closely at my neighbour. He was perfectly sober. A round, small man in a tweed suit, bright brown boots and a bowler hat. As far down his pudgy nose as they would go a pair of gold pince-nez rocked recklessly.

"Had a proper day of it, I have," he declared cheerfully. "Started by slicing a wart off a gentleman's neck—wart I've been on friendly terms with, as you might say, for the last six months or more, wart I could steer the razor round ord'nary with my eyes shut. Oh, my hat, what a mess! Next thing, took a chunk out of a gentleman's ear with the scissors. Not a difficult ear, I mean not one of those ears that flap out at you unexpected; but—well, it didn't stand a chance. Nice about it, he was, but after that I closed down the shop for the day. If things are going to happen, I said, it's better to keep the customers out of it. Let their hair get a bit longer, I said, it won't hurt."

"What's all this got to do with the 10.57?" I asked sharply.

He leaned over with the leer of a major prophet.

"Do you believe in a personal devil, in the natural malice of inanimate

objects, in the law of perversity?" he demanded.

"I don't think I do," I said. "Is that our train coming in?"

"11.25, and no good to honest men like us. I'm telling you, ours is probably at Paddington by now. When it's one of my days it's one of my days, and things aren't done by halves. You'll find all the wheels have come off or the guard's had a seizure. Pity all these good people should have to hang about while my devil has his fling, but there it is." From the way he said it I could see he believed everybody present to be peculiarly privileged. "I'd get up on a barrow and say I'm sorry, but they wouldn't understand."

"They might not," I admitted.

"It was the same with that war," he said.

"That war?"

"You know, that war."

"Oh, that war."

"Most people put it down to a man called Hitler, but I knew better. Just got going in a nice, tidy little business, I had, hundred shaves a day and sixty or seventy cuts, not to speak of occasional shampoos, so when the balloon went up I knew what it was all about. I knew what was coming, so I shut down before the thousand-pounder got there. Pity on the others, though."

"Great pity," I agreed.

"Threw a lot of people out, that war did, all on my account."

"Surely that's our train?"

"11.39. Useless. Favours all the wrong places. Never have understood why they go to all that expense for nothing, as you might say."

"Tell me," I said, "what's biting your personal devil?"

My companion put a match to his pipe and blew a cloud so dense that I was able to follow it in the still air all the way up into the roof of Waterloo.

"It's hardly for us," he said, "to go poking our noses into the unknown."

"I suppose not."

"I've been selected for what you might call special treatment," he added, with modest pride, "and there it is."

"And the law of perversity?"

"You've never read Kopelburger?" asked this strange man, his brows rising almost into his hat.

"I'm afraid I haven't."

"German gentleman. Sort of professor. Gave a famous lecture once, beginning: 'Ladies and gents, what a great honour it is to be about to demonstrate the law of perversity.' And what do you think he did?"

"No idea. That *must* be the 10.57 now?"

"11.55. Sheer waste of public money. He took a plate of bread-and-butter and a lot of samples all the way from cheese-cloth to Turkey carpet so thick you could lose yourself in it, and when he started flipping the bread-and-butter it landed butter up on the cheap stuff, and the better the samples got the more it landed butter down. The Turkey carpet got the butter every time."

"I wish I were a Turkey carpet," I said.

"Wonderful man, Kopelburger. No hope for the world till the malice of inanimate matter gets accepted. Don't tell me you've never noticed it?"

"Well, I live in a Tudor house and it's true the beams get lower—"

"There you are. Much better to face it for what it is. I'm not complaining. Sometimes my devil lays off for a month. Never gives me more than a day of it now at a stretch."

I glanced at the great clock above our heads.

"I wonder if he's got a reliable watch," I said. "Because it's two minutes past twelve—"

At that moment the 10.57 came slithering in with a tired, hunted look on its face which appeared to give much simple pleasure to my companion.

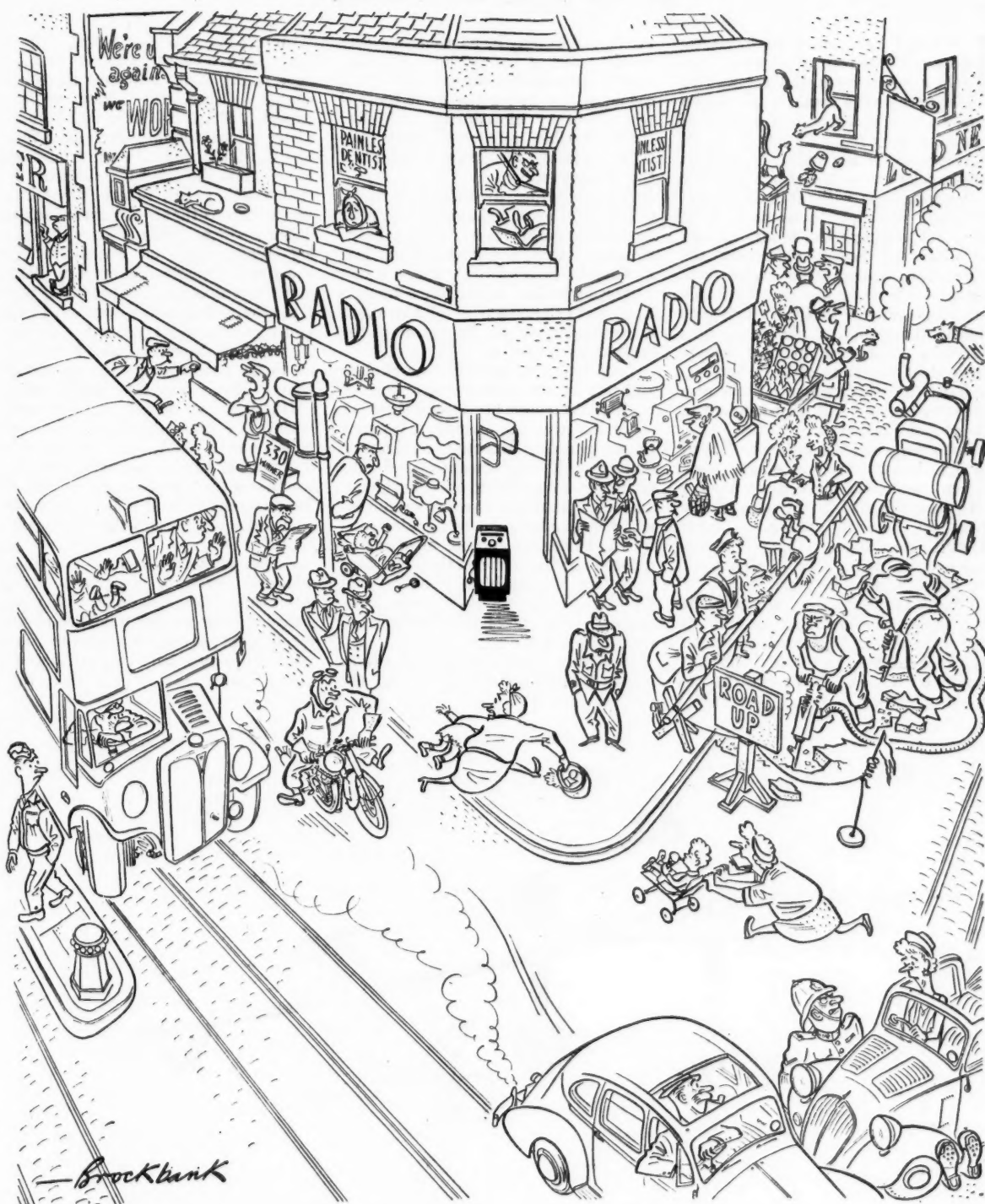
ERIC.



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Baby Grand, perhaps?



"I want you to note particularly in this next movement how the oboe develops the first theme in a pastoral kind of way, then returns to the simple statement, after which the solo violin re-enters with a new theme, in which the ruminative mood is continued . . ."

Brand from the Burning

I AM the last person to interpose myself between the guilty and their just deserts, but somewhere as I write there is a young criminal who must be feeling desperately in need of a comforting word. This is it.

According to my paper he arrived some weeks ago at one of our grubbier railway stations without having paid his fare. He had "a woman" with him, and although the report doesn't say that she hadn't paid hers the description arouses the worst suspicions. However, our young friend's defending solicitor told the magistrate to-day that the couple were now married, and were in fact newly engaged at the time of the crime, so perhaps the woman was only a nice girl after all, and had paid her fare in the conventional way.

But even when the solicitor pleaded "a light-hearted state of mind" (consequent upon the engagement) as a mitigating factor in favour of his client, the magistrate was not swayed. He said a terribly stern thing. "A man who acts in such a way," he boomed, "is scarcely fit to be married."

I think that the guilty boy must at this moment be enduring an anguish of spirit which may well have an injurious effect upon the remainder of his married life. "Not fit to be

married!" he may be moaning, beating on the walls of his prefab. He may already be contemplating divorce proceedings, lest he further taint the girl who stood by him during and after those terrible interviews with the ticket-collector, the station-master and the railway police.

If he is reading this with his shamed, red-rimmed eyes, I should like to offer a crumb of consolation. He has fallen this once, true, but it is not too late to alter his way of life. I was a dispenser of justice myself once upon a time, and I should like to tell him about a case that came up before me in the early days of the war.

I believe the airman's name was Bilks, and the charge was that of having one trouser-leg longer than the other on the Commanding Officer's muster parade. His guilt could not be doubted. Eye-witnesses testified. The trousers were produced as real evidence and the prosecution even submitted what was tantamount to an admission by the prisoner—another airman had pointed out his crime as they had filed from the barrack-block, and he had replied: "I know. It's these — braces." The braces were produced as real evidence too.

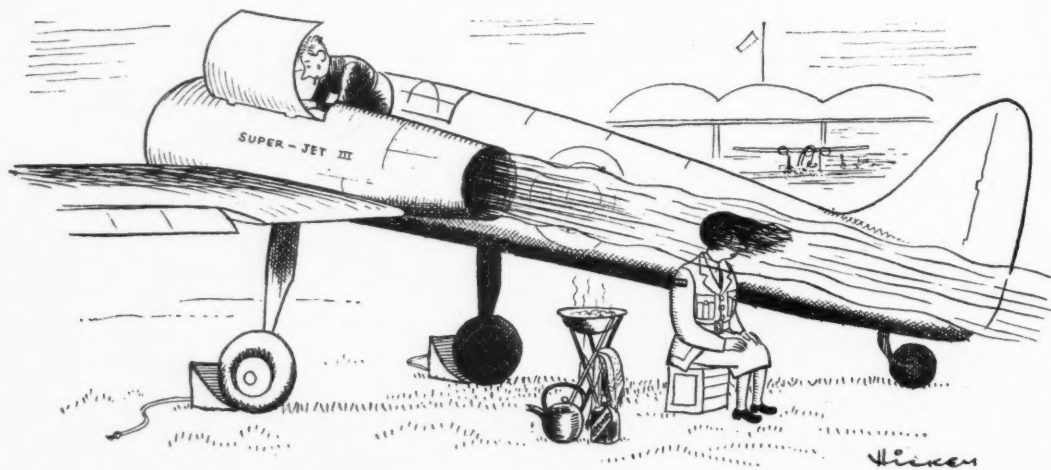
However, all this is perhaps not as relevant as the words I used in my

summing-up. "Bilks," I said, "this is a very grave charge, the sort of thing that might easily influence the whole course of the war. How do you expect, Bilks, to achieve ultimate victory over a highly-disciplined force like the Luftwaffe with one trouser-leg longer than the other? Or shorter, for that matter? Eh, Bilks? What have you to say to that? An extra inch on a trouser-leg—perhaps *your* trouser-leg—might cost us an aircraft, a squadron, a battle, a campaign. Have you thought of that? Think of it now. I'm ashamed of you, Bilks, and I hope you're ashamed of yourself. A man who can act in such a way is scarcely fit to be a member of the Royal Air Force. Three days' C.C. March out!"

Harsh words, no doubt. Too harsh, perhaps, I thought afterwards. But Bilks was a man, and resisted the temptation to get maudlin over his worthlessness. Instead he got eleven Messerschmitts, a D.F.M., a Commission and a good post at the Air Ministry (D.P.9).

So be of good cheer, young man, wherever you are. Dry those tears, scout those doubts, kiss that wife, never travel without a ticket unless you know a reliable short-cut through the goods yard, and you'll make a go of it yet—never fear.

J. B. B.



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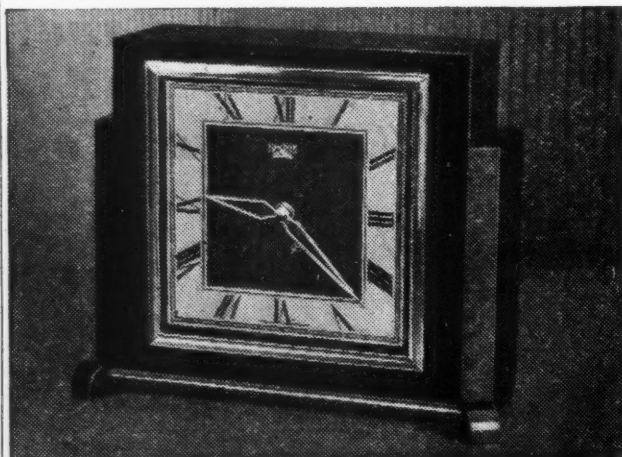


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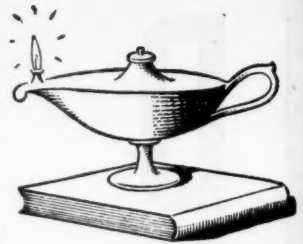
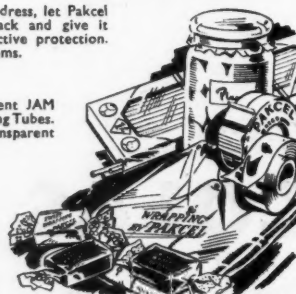
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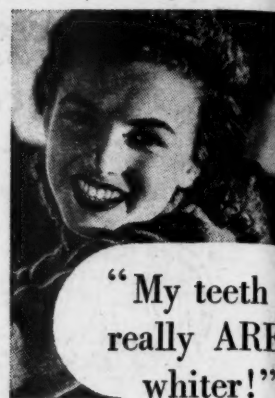
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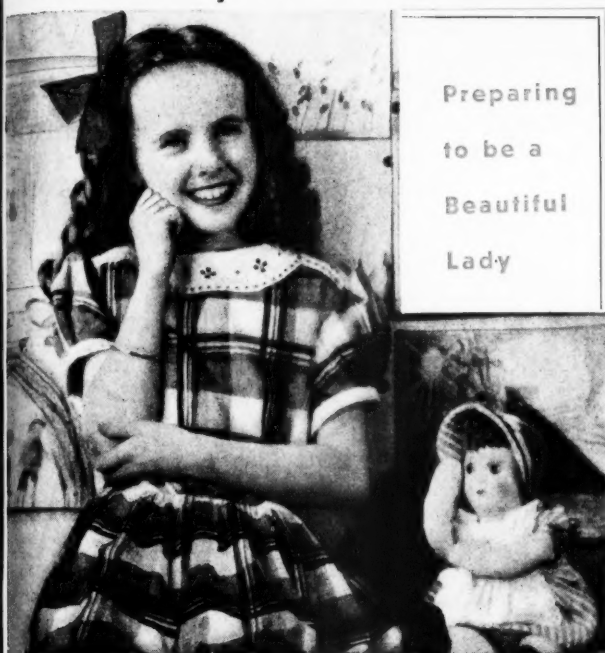
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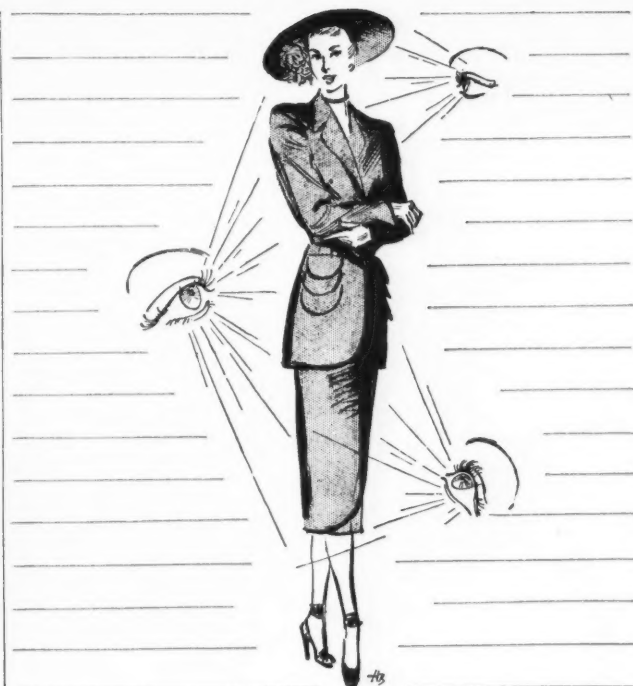
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